Second-half comeback

Cabrillo baseball has the talent and is ready to improve on its record

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The Cabrillo College baseball team is top hitter — catcher Sergio Sanchez and staff ace Shane Carle — said the Seahawks are fully charged for a second-half run.

The Seahawks are 6-1 and have collected 18 runs and have hit the ball far enough to produce a hard single.

It’s an early friday and Sanchez is in time to make his run. The team is fired up after winning two games in a three-game series with defending state champion San Jose State Delta to conclude nonconference play, Feb. 23.

"If we play the way we should, we can compete with anybody," said Carle, a sophomore who has already committed to Long Beach State University next season.

Carle is one of five San Jose State players who have already committed to four-year schools for next season.

Sanchez — a shortstop and pitcher turned catcher — is another. He’s slated to attend San Diego State.

In the field, both players could go on to their future college teams.

SEAN CARRILLO / SCS

Catcher Sergio Sanchez brings a substantial skill set, along with a positive clubhouse presence and outlook, to Cabrillo.

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are being heavily counted by MLB teams and could be drafted in June. For now, their focus is on earning a trip to the state playoffs.

"It’s in the back of your mind," Sanchez said. "You just think about winning. You want to get to state. I know if you do good, other things will come.

Neither Carle nor Sanchez has done much to start. Carle is 12-for-35 with 1.011 ERA in 30 innings. He’s allowed 17 hits and 11 earned runs, while walking six and striking out 17.

Carle — who throws a fastball, along with a splitter, curve, and slider — was a second-team all-conference last season.

He learned his split-fingered fastball from Detroit Tigers minor league pitcher. Carle is returning to this season as Cabrillo’s catcher. "And he’s going to get better," Sanchez added.

In addition to Carle, the Seahawks return pitchers Taylor Toccalino and Josh Rodriguez to help make up their starting rotation. Rodriguez was a set-up man last season.

"Our stuff is good," Carle said. "We have guys for every role. Our pitching has been pretty solid. Our offense has been up and down."

Sanchez is fired up to that. He’s batting .336 with 15 RBIs in 45 games with Arizona Western.

After falling out with Arizona Eastern coaches, Sanchez transferred to Cabrillo in the off-season and was demoted to the bench. He started every game and had 20 hits, 15 RBIs, and a .336 batting average.

"He’s hitting 250 (15-for-50) with nine doubles and 12 RBIs — both totals lead the Seahawks. It’s quite a dropoff from last season, when the former Watsonville Aggie’s stats were 1.182 in 30 games with Arizona Western.

Taylor Toccalino keeps it light in the Cabrillo dugout during an intrasquad scrimmage in February that was attended by three assistant coaches.

The defense — 20 errors in its first 14 games — will improve too, Sanchez said.

"Everybody is more comfortable and having fun in what the coaches are teaching us," Sanchez said. "We’re definitely on the right path."