Cabrillo dominates home opener

By JUlie JAG
jjag@santacruzensentinel.com

APTOS — This didn’t look like growing pains.
In its home opener Wednesday night, the Cabrillo College women’s volleyball team summarily dispatched of Skyline 25-15, 25-9, 25-14.

“I think Cabrillo came out with their physicality and our girls were trying to hang in there,” Ed Parker, Skyline’s interim coach while Ray Salahuddin is on paternity leave, said in summing up the match.

This is from a Seahawks team that, just a week earlier, coach Gabby Houston-Neville said she expected to take its lumps in the early going of the 2012 season before turning into a state-tournament qualifier like her 2010 and 2011 squads. After the match, though, Houston-Neville said the three-set win shows how much progress Cabrillo has already made since starting its season a rocky 2-4.

“This match is a great example. We won in three, we finished it even with the injury,” she said. “That’s something

we wouldn’t have done three or four weeks ago.”

The injury, though, may slow the Seahawks’ progress considerably.
Late in Game 2, with Cabrillo up 23-9, freshman setter and middle Reina Sykes went up for a block and landed hard on her left ankle before tumbling to the ground and wailing in pain.

Trainer Mark Ramsey wrapped the injury in an air cast and she was later wheeled out of the gym on a stretcher.

Houston-Neville said she believes Sykes either dislocated or broke the ankle.

Sykes managed six kills — tied for second most on the team behind Kaitlyn Shaug’s nine — and several assists and had established herself as a strong component of the team before the injury.

Freshman Hannah Dykstra, Cabrillo’s other setter in the 6-2 formation, took over without much of a hiccup for the rest of the match.

“That was a blow, that was unexpected,” Houston-Neville said of Sykes’ injury. “She definitely was one of those players I brought in and thought she could be a star. I was grooming her for that.”

Even though the Seahawks closed that game out quickly, they seemed out of sorts as they began Game 3. They struggled to find a groove early and allowed Skyline to hang around until sophomore Caitlin Macleod stepped back to serve. Her low and flat jump serve netted Cabrillo nine straight points, including five aces, and she added five more late in the game without a serving error.

Juliana Hernandez led Skyline (4-8) with six kills and Kimberly Lopez made 20 digs. Kelsee Montagna made six kills and four blocks for Cabrillo.

Team performances like that help Houston-Neville believe her Seahawks might actually rebound from the injury and their early struggles with more fire in their bellies.

Freshman Delanie Borek, a recent Harbor High graduate who made six kills on the night as an outside hitter, agreed.

“I think we’re going to make it to the top four because we have so much confidence and we’re going to work through all these things,” she said.

It also doesn’t hurt that, in a conference realignment, Cabrillo was bumped into the Coast Conference North. The Seahawks will vie for their sixth straight conference title against new conference foes San Jose City, Canada, De Anza and San Francisco City, as well as Hartnell, which followed the Seahawks to the new conference.

“It will be good,” Houston-Neville said. “It will give us a chance to work some things out.”