Poor rebounding plagues Comets
Comets’ successful season ends with crushing playoff loss at Cabrillo College

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APTOs — Another solid year came to an end in the NorCal Regional Playoff Tournament for the men’s basketball team with a 65-57 loss to Cabrillo College here Friday.

Contra Costa College’s loss came in the second round of the tournament. The Comets were the 12th seed.

Before last season the Comets had not been to the postseason since 2006. Yet, after winning at least 20 games for the second consecutive year, an early exit from the tourney was unacceptable in the Comet locker room.

“In the playoffs you have to bring your ‘A-game,’’ coach Miguel Johnson said with a sigh, expressing his disappointment. “If you don’t play your best, it’s tough to win. We played hard, we just came up short.”

The Comets finished the 2012-13 season 21-8, 12-4 in the Bay Valley Conference.

Down by five points at halftime, CCC entered the second half with the same defensive intensity it displayed in the first. But, unfortunately for the Comets, CCC allowed 12 offensive rebounds on 25 missed shots, meaning, the Seahawks grabbed an offensive rebound on nearly 50 percent of their missed shots. Against Merritt College on Feb. 20, a 78-62 defeat, CCC allowed 15 offensive rebounds on just 19 missed shots — an offensive rebound on 76 percent of the Thunderbirds’ misses.

In a 71-64 victory against College of Marin on Feb. 15, the Mariners were only able to grab seven offensive rebounds on 25 misses.

Sophomore forward Juan Parker’s CCC basketball career came to an end with the loss. Unhappy with the way the squad finished the season, Parker said he is still glad and proud to be a part of the men’s basketball program’s recent success.

“We brought an intensity — a desire to win,” he said regarding what it took to win 42 games in two seasons of basketball. “The team wanted to prove that we are a good basketball program and we are doing good things at this college.”

The Comets finished 21-10 overall last year and lost a second round regional game to City College of San Francisco.

Parker also attributed the loss to allowing the Seahawks to control the glass.

“We could’ve defended better and boxed out on the defensive end,” he said. “We gave (too many) offensive rebounds. (We might have won) if we could’ve been more aggressive.”

Being down by as many as 12 points in the second half, the Comets did their best to battle back. A 3-pointer by guard Omariyae Boughton cut the Seahawk lead to seven at one point, and a layup by Tyler West Jr. cut the lead to five minutes later.

“We played hard but we couldn’t get (the loose balls),” Boughton said. “(Cabrillo) got a lot of extra possessions which helped them stay ahead (late) in the game. It came down to the extra possessions and who wanted it more.”

Cabrillo was able to keep the game from getting any closer by securing offensive rebounds, making put-backs and getting to the foul line and making free throws. Down seven with less than a minute to play, Wickett shot a deep 3-pointer and missed everything.

The Seahawks scored on their next possession to go up nine points with 32 seconds left to play, but sealing the win for Cabrillo. The Seahawks finished the regular season 20-8 overall with a Coast-South Conference record of 10-2.

“We didn’t get much from our regular guys,’’ coach Johnson said. “The toughest loss is always the one you suffer last.”