HAWKS HOLD ON

Cabrillo starts season with 5-3 win in Monterey tourney

By TONY NUNEZ

MONTEREY — First-game jitters were present, but that didn’t stop Cabrillo from starting their season on the right foot.

The Cabrillo College Seahawks used a three-run sixth inning and escaped a bases-loaded, no-outs situation in the top of the seventh, to beat the Siskiyouos Eagles 5-3 Friday.

“It’s a good way to start the season,” said Cabrillo head coach Kristy Ballinger. “We were a little shaky, so hopefully we got all the nerves out.”

It was the first game of four that they have on tap for the weekend in the Monterey Peninsula College tournament.

They will play MPC tomorrow at 12 p.m. and Feather River at 2 p.m.

But the Eagles gave the Hawks all they could handle Friday.

Siskiyouos tied the game up at two in the top of the sixth inning, but Cabrillo used small ball on their turn to snatch the lead right back.

They scored three runs and tallied five hits, three bunts by Randee Hindman, Emily Payne and Mikal Cuellar, to grab the lead and put them in prime position to end the game early by getting three outs in the top of the seventh.

But those three outs didn’t come easy.

A walk, double and a hit by pitch loaded the bases with two outs, but relief pitcher Shannon Egan kept her cool to get the final three outs and the W.

“As a pitcher you have to keep your composure and take it one pitch at a time,” said the sophomore righty. “I had confidence in my defense behind me, and we kept it together and pulled through.”

Egan recorded the save through 1 and 2/3’s innings allowing two hits, a walk and one run on a fielders choice.

She came in during the sixth inning in relief of starter Randee Hindman, who went 5 and 1/3 allowing six hits, a walk and 1 earned run while racking up eight strikeouts.

Both pitchers will try to fill the void left by last year’s ace and Coast Conference Pitcher of the Year Sierra Clark.

Along with the loss of Clark, the Hawks also lost all-conference players Sherri Morikawa and Jack Astuna from last year’s Coast Conference championship team.

But the Hawks still have the services of all-conference players Angela Martin, Valerie Silva, Annalise Bryant, and Payne to lead them this year.

“I think this year, the team bonding is happening earlier than it did a year ago,” Ballinger, now in her third year as the Hawks head coach, said. “I think that will benefit us a lot more this year, coming together.”

That early arriving chemistry allowed Cabrillo to jump to a 2-0 lead in the second inning when freshman Alyssa Rodriguez hit a single to bring in Bryant and Cuellar.

The Eagles got on the board in the fifth inning thanks to an RBI single from Katelyn Bueman to make it 2-1.

In the following inning Siskiyouos Emily Copeland laid down a bunt with Sydney Haynes at third. The Hawks allowed Copeland to run to first and tricked Haynes into a pickle between third and home.

Cabrillo had the out by Bryant’s throw home went directly down the line and clanked off of Haynes’ helmet, which allowed her to score the game-tying run.

Ballinger brought in Eagan to salvage the inning, and she got the two outs to end the inning knotted at two.

But Cabrillo answered two runs with three.

Karlee Saha, Hindman and Silva all scored before inning’s end.

Cabrillo Seahawks pitcher Shannon Egan prepares to deliver a pitch against the Siskiyouos Eagles during the seventh inning Friday afternoon at Monterey Peninsula College.

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