Hawks Up One

Above: Mike Angelo (14) gets a round of high-fives from his teammates after scoring a run in the eighth inning to give Cabrillo a 6-1 lead in game one of the 2014 Regional Round. Below: Matt Palazzo throws a pitch during the first inning in Friday’s game against Sacramento City College.

Cabrillo takes Game 1 of best-of-three series against Sac City

By JUAN REYES
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APTOS — The Cabrillo College Seahawks picked up a valuable lesson in last year’s Regional Round of the California Community College baseball playoffs. Don’t lose game one.

Matt Palazzo had no problem getting it done on the mound for the Seahawks on Friday afternoon in a 6-1 win over Sacramento City College in the first game of the 2014 Regional Round.

The right-handed freshman pitcher threw for seven innings and only gave up one run on five hits, including two strikeouts.

Palazzo also had some help from his offense, which scored three runs in the first inning and added some more insurance by scoring three more in the eighth to guarantee Cabrillo’s victory.

“I thought Matt did a great job,” said Seahawks head coach Bob Kittle. “I thought the strike zone was a little tight and he adjusted to it, he did a great job. We pushed him a little further than I wanted to but in a best of three series of the playoffs you have to do some things differently and we did.”

Despite starting the season 3-9, the Seahawks won 18 of the last 24 games, including a seven-game winning streak, which helped them win a second consecutive Coast Conference title.

The Panthers rallied Palazzo in the first when Jared James reached base on balls and found his way on third base after two wild pitches thrown behind Cabrillo catcher Josh Thorpe.

Kayshka Dudley’s base hit single brought James to put Sac City up 1-0, but Palazzo settled down and was able to get the following three batters out.

“(It) was a little bit of nerves, it’s a big game,” Palazzo said. “I kind of had trouble locating all my pitches in the first inning but after that I settled in and started doing it, locked in and got all my pitches working for me.”

Cabrillo responded right back in its first at bat when Drake Yoshioka got on first base on an error thrown by second baseman Tyler Houlihan. Connor Havstad got on base with his single to right center field.

Mike Angelo’s base hit brought in Havstad and Yoshioka to put the Seahawks up 2-1. The very next batter was Caleb Pilliam and his single to right field extended Cabrillo’s lead by two runs.

It was all Palazzo needed to ensure his team’s game-one win as he cruised through six scoreless innings until he was relieved by Eddy Puga who also didn’t allow a run on only one hit and one walk.

Thorpe tallied two RBIs on his base hit single that brought in Angelo and Pilliam in the eighth. Yoshioka’s sacrifice ground out extended the Cabrillo lead to 6-1.

“It’s a best of three series,” Kittle said. “If we replicate that we’re going to win. We’ve got Nat on the mound and we play like that behind him it’ll be a okay.”

Game 2 is scheduled for an 11 a.m. start today at Cabrillo.