NORCAL WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL PLAYOFFS

CABRILLO CRUISES

Cabrillo College middle blocker Madison Borch watches one of her blocks fall to the floor during the Seahawks' 3-set home playoff victory over Los Medanos on Tuesday.

Seahawks open postseason with sweep of Los Medanos

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APTOPS • The Cabrillo College women's volleyball team might have come into Tuesday night's first round of the NorCal Regional playoffs with a state title to defend, an undefeated record and the bracket's No. 1 seed. But this year's group feels they still have something to prove.

The Seahawks wasted little time convincing No. 3 Los Medanos when they posted a three-set victory, 25-15, 25-16, 25-14, at Cabrillo College in Aptos.

The Seahawks' 25th-straight sweep and extend the team's winning streak to 59 straight matches dating back to last year's championship run. Cabrillo (26-10) will host No. 9 Sierra (32-12) in the second round on Saturday at 7 p.m.

"I think going undefeated in our regular season definitely made a statement, especially to the Southern California teams, just showing them we're still in it," said Cabrillo College outside hitter Kelsey Shaver, who recorded a match-high 10 kills to go along with six aces and two blocks. "It feels good, but we still want to work really hard and prove ourselves.

Shaver, who last weekend was named MVP of the Coast Conference North, on Tuesday was named to the all-state team by the California Community College Women's Volleyball Coaches Association. She was also named first team All-American by the American Volleyball Coaches Association.

Sousmatoire middle blocker Madison Borch and sousmatoire setter Tiera Gasquet were both named all-region for Northern California. While Cabrillo graduate Chantel Hines was named Coach of the Year for the region.

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for a second time. Borch combined kills and Gasquet led all players with 40 assists to go along with five blocks and two aces against Los Medanos (34-25).

"We definitely had butterflies," Shaver said of the first-round matchup. "We just had to know how to channel that energy into positive energy. I think it worked out really well.

Cabrillo had no problem easily winning the first set and looked as strong as ever on route to the 25th sweep of the season. The second set was an eye-opener for the Seahawks, though.

Houston-Neville said the team looked as if they had a small drop in energy coming into the second set.

A lack of communication on the court also didn't help the defending champs pull away from the Mustangs, who were down by two points at 20-18.

"It was the communication," Borch said. "It was probably the energy too, because sometimes we get comfortable when we know we have the lead on a team. I'm glad we can recognize it right away, though.

Houston-Neville opted not to call a timeout and said the reason she never did was because she knew her team would dig themselves out of the hole.

"I didn't really feel like there was anything really serious going on," she said. "I knew that they could overcome it themselves. I didn't want to waste a timeout, but I think if they wouldn't have sided out on that next point I would have taken one just to talk to them a little bit.

No soil. The Seahawks bounced back to recapture the lead and pushed the score to 15-14. That's when Shaver came up to serve and led her team to eight straight points to close out the second set.

"I'm glad to see her teammates," Borch said of Shaver. "She's put such a force on the court and I'm so proud of her. She's been doing so good all year and this game, she definitely stepped up.

All the momentum had swung Cabrillo's way in the third set. Once again it was the serving game that carried the Seahawks to the win.

Houston-Neville said it was the key to Tuesday's victory.

"It was the serving," she said. "So much of the game is all about the serving. Once we turned the serving back on, then we got back into the game.

Houston-Neville is happy to be moving on but said she would like to see the intensity stay at an all-time high during the remainder of the postseason. "I thought they played really well tonight," she said. "I thought they were real consistent. I think we just can't have that energy drop."