JC VOLLEYBALL NORCAL PLAYOFFS

Cabrillo cruises to next round of NorCal playoffs

Seahawks host Foothill today at 7 p.m. for state playoff berth

By TONY NUNEZ
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

APTO S — The Cabrillo College Seahawks did just about everything right Saturday night.

They notched their 60th straight win, swept their 21st consecutive opponent, packed their home side stands and even had one of their alumni, Jon Jon Moore, knock the National Anthem out of the park.

The only area of concern that head coach Gabby Houston-Neville had after the 25-18, 25-15, 25-16 win over Sierra College in the second round of the Community College Athletic Association Northern California playoffs was whether or not her team is battle tested enough.

But the No. 1-seeded Seahawks were all in agreement that visiting No. 9 Sierra gave them a good push.

“We love playing teams at our level,” said sophomore middle Madison Borch. “It brings out the best in our team.”

Playing against what they called the best team they’ve seen in recent memory, Borch recorded eight kills and three big blocks, Kelsey Shaver led the team with 14 kills, while adding 12 digs and three aces, Grace Ryan tallied 15 digs and Tyler Gasoloha contributed 32 assists and eight digs.

“I didn’t know that today was going to be a sweep,” Houston-Neville said. “You go into every match and you try to take it one match at a time. We’ve never played Sierra and they played really well.”

The Wolverines, who finished third in the Big 8 Conference, held small leads in all three games but runs showcasing flashes of brilliance through its size and athleticism led Cabrillo to take big leads en route to the 60th consecutive win.

It was just another step for the Seahawks on the road to repeating as CCCAA State Champions.

Cabrillo started the year as the top team in the state rankings and they have yet to be knocked off.

Their lone close call came in a five-game battle against Feather River College, of Quincy, in mid-September. The two teams look to be on a collision course for the Northern Californian crown as both have swept their two first round opponents.

But Cabrillo is firmly focused on its next challenge, however, which is tonight’s matchup against Foothill College at 7 p.m. at home.

Cabrillo swept No. 5 Foothill earlier in a conference crossover match.

“We’re taking it one game at a time,” said sophomore outside Alex Flores, who added five kills. “Obviously state is always in the back of our minds, but we’re always focused on our next opponent.”

Having not played Sierra this season the Seahawks were surprised with the fight and defensive pressure the Wolverines brought.

“I didn’t see anyone give up on that team,” Borch said. “They kept fighting no matter the score. They wanted to win and once we saw that we dug in.”

In Game 1 the Seahawks struggled together a 8-1 run that was capped off by a Morgan Matias rejection to take hold of the game after being tied at five with the visitors.

Game 2 was more of the same as Sierra held it close early until Borch struck down a powerful kill to open a three-point lead, 10-7. Cabrillo then opened it up with another impressive run and led by as much as 11 points before taking the game.

“The Seahawks had to work a bit harder in the final game. Sierra held a 10-9 lead before Cabrillo reeled off five straight points and forced the Wolverines to take a timeout.

The pause in the game did little to slow the Seahawks and Cabrillo cruised by scoring the final six points to clinch the win.

“There’s never worry or panic,” Flores said of being in close games. “On the court or on the sidelines we’re always composed. We know that we can get out of it. We trust each other.”

See CABRILLO, page B3