Cabrillo denied second consecutive state title

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APTOS — The Cabrillo College Seahawks women's volleyball finished in second place in the California Community College Athletic Association state finals when they fell 25-15, 25-19, 22-25, 25-18 to the undefeated Irvine Valley Lasers Sunday at Cabrillo College in Aptos.

Going into Sunday, the Seahawks had to win two games to repeat as state champions and they knew it would be tough. They would have to play the Lasers again who snapped the Seahawks' 62-game winning streak Saturday in the first leg of double-elimination, four-team tournament.

The Seahawks (32-2, 12-0) opened Sunday against Grossmont with the winner advancing to the state finals to play Irvine Valley. Thanks to three straight blocks in Game 2 by freshman Patrice Williams, Cabrillo won 25-20, 25-20, 25-21.

"It was so much fun," Williams said, "Letting your mind take over and letting your skills do their thing."

That set up the decisive meeting between the Seahawks and the Lasers. They met Saturday and Irvine Valley swept the Seahawks to snap their 62-game winning streak.

"A loss was kind of disappointing," said Alex Flores. "We made it a goal to win state but not go undefeated."

When they met Sunday, it was a match-up of the state's top ranked teams, Cabrillo the No. 1 in the north and Irvine Valley, the No. 1 from the south.

The Lasers defense was able to stop nearly everything the Seahawks put forward and Annie Mitchem of Irvine Valley was unstoppable finishing with 24 kills and being named most valuable player of the tournament.

Kelsey Shaver of the Seahawks was named most valuable player of the state tournament last year as a freshman and she had several key plays Sunday finishing with 15 kills against the Lasers.

"I think that we played really hard against them but they were the better team," Shaver said. "We are really proud of the path leading up to this tournament and we're not going to dwell on that last match. We are really happy about how our season went."

After the Lasers won the first two games of the finals, Cabrillo fought hard and won the third game 25-22.

Game 4 started in the Lasers favor and they took a 13-6 lead. Cabrillo then called a timeout and put Nikki Miyoshita in for the first time because she had been suffering from a hand injury. The Seahawks went on a 5-1 lead to get the game to 14-11. She provided the team a spark but the Seahawks couldn’t put enough together and fell 25-18 to Irvine Valley.

The sophomores of Cabrillo finished their careers with a state championship in 2013, second place in 2014 and an overall record of 63-2 with the only losses being to No. 1 Irvine Valley – both this year.

Williams who will be back next season had seven kills against Grossmont and 11 kills in the final against Irvine Valley.

"I'm out for blood next season," Williams said with a smile. Heading into her sophomore year, she will be the leading returner.

"Patrice and Maddy's [Borch] blocking and hitting really turned it around for us," said Cabrillo head coach Gabby Houston-Neville. "They were relentless."

Borch had 14 kills in their game Sunday against Grossmont including the game winner in Game 2.

"I just went for it," Borch said. "It was awesome, it felt great."

Most of the Seahawks were emotionally sad that they lost, but Williams wasn’t one of them.

When she was presented with her second place medal, she ran back to the team full of excitement which led to most of the team smiling and Borch giving her a high five.

"I just want them to know that we had such a good season," Williams said. "We have this friendship, and even though we lost, we don't need to be sad because we were outplayed."