MEN'S BASKETBALL

SJCC pressure cooks Cabrillo

Seahawks suffer first Coast Conference South loss of season

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Something wasn’t just quite right for the Cabrillo College men’s basketball team heading into Friday night’s Coast Conference South Division matchup against San Jose City College.

The Seahawks (9-8, 1-1) had their three-game winning streak snapped after the visiting Jaguars (14-3, 1-0) took care of business en route to a 92-80 victory in Apts. It was San Jose City’s first conference game of the season.

Chris Sterling scored a game-high 26 points for SJCC, which used its team’s size and suffocating defense to force Cabrillo to turn the ball over 15 times. The Jaguars also made 31 of 33 free-throw attempts.

It was the first time this season the Seahawks have given up more than 90 points in a game.

“We played a better team,” said Cabrillo coach Tony Marcopulos. “They kicked our (butts) on the boards, and we didn’t handle their pressure really well. That was two things that we talked about going into the game.”

Marcopulos said he wasn’t surprised to see the Jaguars press the Seahawks in the back court as much as they did. He added that Cabrillo did not do a good job of responding to the pressure.

Allen Wilcher, who finished with a team-high 20 points, said the full court pressure sped up Cabrillo’s tempo beyond what the Seahawks were comfortable with at first, but the team managed to respond positively for the most part.

“We started to buckle down,” Wilcher said. “Once we got control of the ball, we took better care of it. But I can’t really say too much, they were just the better team tonight.”

It also didn’t help that the Seahawks were outrebounded and gave SJCC plenty of second and even third chances to get off another shot.

“Second chance points is a big thing in the game of basketball,” Wilcher said. “You give them time to score again, two-pointers, 3-pointers, it all adds up. We have to limit those and, like I said, we have to rebound the ball better next time and do a better thing in the defensive end next time.”

The game was tied at 10-all early, but SJCC went on an 11-2 run behind its full-court pressure to make it 21-12. Cabrillo crawled right back after Latrell Wilson knocked in his second 3-point basket of the half to make it 21-17.

SJCC fumbled the ball and committed a couple of turnovers giving the Seahawks even more of a chance to get back in the game. It also kept the full-court defense on Cabrillo, but that backfired when the offense started to get the ball past the half court no problem.

The Jaguars took back the momentum in a flash, however, as they went on a 7-2 run to close out the first half and led Cabrillo 43-37. Jackson had 10 points and Allen Wilcher had a team-high 11 points at the end of the first half.

SJCC showed no signs of slowing down as they brought back the full court pressure and this time forced Cabrillo to turn the ball over three times in the first four minutes of the second half. The Jaguars went on 10-2 run before Wilson stopped the bleeding and banked in his third 3-point bucket to make it 53-42.

“We kind of shut down, didn't rebound the ball very well,” Wilcher said. “They out hustled us on plays and they made shots. Everything that they shot went in. But we fought hard as we could, we could have done a better job defensively. That's what killed us tonight.”