San Joaquin Delta College had the first look at two local women's water polo teams Wednesday afternoon.

First on the docket was College of San Mateo, which the Mustangs outpaced 19-11. A couple of hours later in Los Altos Hills, it was 2013 Coast Conference champion Foothill College coming out on the losing end 11-10 as Delta swept its doubleheader.

Neither CSM nor Foothill play again until next week's West Valley Tournament in Saratoga.

"It will take time, but this loss gives awareness, team awareness, and the goal must be to improve as a unit," CSM coach Randy Wright.

Foothill coach Jeffrey Bissell, in his 14th season, is more concerned with the conference campaign than the preseason. The main goal for the Owls is to reach the postseason, with the Coast champion earning an automatic bid.

"If we go far in the playoffs and we end up in the state championships, it's just like a bonus," said Bissell, whose team has won conference titles 10 of the previous 14 years.

The Owls return six players, including Gurpuran Singh (Notre Dame-Belmont), who was forced to sit out last season after playing on the 2012 NorCal championship team.

"She's just an incredible asset to have back," Bissell said.

Singh's ability to guard at 2 meters will free up lefty Marissa Sendejas, who scored 42 goals to go along with 34 assists as a freshman. Another key sophomore is Cassidy Carlsen, who will see an increased role in the pool.

"She understands the game, she knows what to do," Bissell said. "She's another left-hander, so it's great to have multiple left-handers on the pool at the same time."

Megan Bordy (Woodside) was sidelined in the spring and summer while recovering from offseason knee surgery, but she's back in full force this fall.

"She'll definitely contribute in front of the cage as well," Bissell said. "She's been nothing but great for the program. She worked real hard to get back to play this season, so I'm excited to see what she can do."

Gone is goalie Ashley Arras, last year's co-Coast MVP and a first-team All-American. One of two players vying to replace her is Donya Dehnad (Menlo School-Atherton).

Other newcomers include De Anza College transfer Jen Liu, who brings with her speed and instincts, as well as Lauren Lesyna (Gunn-Palo Alto).

"Those two new faces and a couple of other girls have a chance to do really well," said Bissell, who also mentioned Layna Aurchard and another lefty in Chase Mase.

While Foothill has 15 players on its roster, CSM struggled to add depth. The Bulldogs had eight players until Patricia Yunzio, a member of the basketball team, joined them at the last minute.
In practice, Wright calls upon five alumni on the coaching staff to help out.

"They're great," Wright said. "They do what I tell them, I can break up into groups and isolate different types of practice for different people. So it really works out."

Back for more is Shelby Chung, who led CSM with 61 goals last year. The sophomore scored six times in the loss to Delta.

"She's a good player," Wright said. "Great arm, great accuracy, good all-around player. She'll probably be our leading scorer again this year."

Her high school teammate at Sonora, Kacee Johnson, is also on the roster. Another sophomore is goalkeeper Ashley Mullany, who might be asked to guard the cage for every minute of every game this season.

A new weapon on offense is Tayler O'Connor, who graduated from Mercy-Burlingame in 2006 and was a high jumper at Long Beach State. O'Connor is finishing her prerequisites for nursing this semester.

"It's taken a little time to get her feet back wet," Wright said of O'Connor, who scored four goals in her debut.

Email Vytas Mazeika at vmazeika@dailynewsgroup.com; follow him at Twitter.com/dailynewsvytas.