Owls grab 1st NorCal polo crown

Did the Foothill College women's water polo team save its best for last? Quite possibly. The Owls made history by winning their first NorCal title Saturday afternoon with a dominant 14-6 effort at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill.

"This weekend was by far the best I had seen the girls play all year," Foothill coach Jeff Bissell said. "Whether they were prepared or ready to go, or they were just psyched up, or a combination of the both of those, they came out and did exactly what they were supposed to do."

Foothill (24-4), champion of the Coast Conference, could almost do no wrong. The initial option on offense was center Jaimie Breen (Woodside), who scored twice. When DVC (25-5) tried to drop to neutralize Breen, that allowed Hailey Smith (Menlo School-Atherton) to attack from the perimeter and Gurpuran Singh (Notre Dame-Belmont) to drive and post up. Each scored a hat trick.

When DVC responded and tried to take them away, it was Anna Kim's turn to step up. The sophomore attacked scored a team-high four goals, while Deanna Farley matched Breen's two goals.

"When one girl put the ball in the back of the net and made the other team adjust, there was another girl stepping up," Bissell said. "Every girl did their job, and that's what we preach."

Foothill drew nine exclusions and converted on 78 percent of its power plays. And the defense was also up for the task, with goalie Dana Delucchi (Notre Dame-Belmont) finishing with 11 saves.

With the outcome no longer in doubt, Bissell was able to take his shoes and socks off before the Owls celebrated their first NorCal title by throwing their 12th-year coach into the pool.

"For sure no cell phone," Bissell said.

- Foothill returns to DVC on Friday as the No. 1 seed from the North to play in the state championships. Its semifinal is at 10:30 a.m. against Fullerton (27-5), the No. 2 seed from
the South. The women's third-place match is Saturday at 9 a.m., with the title match scheduled for 12:30 p.m.

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