

Swede volleyball team prepared to turn up the heat

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Players focus on 212 degrees.

Water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit.

At 210 degrees it's very hot and at 211 degrees it's even hotter but water doesn't actually boil until it reaches exactly 212 degrees.

That seems more like a science lesson than a volleyball concept but that's where the Swede girls have their sights set this fall: 212 degrees.

"That one degree is a tiny margin," said Gothenburg head coach Becky Costello, "but it's a tiny margin that makes a big difference."

It's that small amount of extra effort fans can expect to see from the Swede volleyball team.

And they'll be turning up the heat as a unit.

"We no longer have that one outstanding player who was always the go-to girl," Costello said, referring to 2010 graduate Emily Max who anchored the Swedes for four years. "We're really going to have to rely on every girl on the floor working together."

So far, Costello said, the unit seems to be holding together nicely.

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“I see volleyball as the ultimate team sport,” the coach said. “That’s what we’re working toward.”

Despite losing the all-star caliber of Max, Costello said the Swedes bring consistency and experience to the floor.

Senior Joslyn Oliver, who was injured most of last season, is a strong outside hitter, Costello said, and sophomore Jacey Wiggins can be a lethal left-hander playing on the right side.

“We’ll utilize both those girls a lot,” Costello said.

Senior McKenzie Geiken returns for a third season as setter and Ali Clark has played the libero since her freshman year.

“The senior girls have all had some varsity experience since they were sophomores,” Costello said. “It’s not like we’re putting brand new kids on the floor with no experience.”

And younger girls are ready to step into new roles too, she said.

“We’ll probably see 10 or 11 girls in the rotation every game,” the coach said.

While Costello expects the Swedes to play solid defense and be quick and scrappy, she believes the key to winning games will lie in their serving and receiving.

“There’s simply no forgiveness in rally scoring,” Costello said. “We are going to have to eliminate the errors on our side of the net.”

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Gothenburg opens the season at home against Broken Bow on Thursday. Costello said the Indians were young last year so she expects them to be improved.

Then the Swedes better be prepared to travel. After the first game, the varsity plays at home only three more times.

Costello said she expects perennial power Ogallala, which drops to Class C-1 this season, to battle with Minden as the dominant teams in the Southwest Conference.

Should the Swedes get through their C1-11 sub-district against Broken Bow, Cozad, Hershey and Southern Valley, Ogallala waits on the other side.

“We’re just going to go play one game at a time,” Costello said.

Members of the 2010 Gothenburg volleyball team are (*denotes letter winner):

Seniors—Abby Ambler*, Ali Clark*, McKenzie Geiken*, Abie Jensen*, Joslyn Oliver*, Janae Wiggins*.

JUNIORS—Makayla Franzen*, Erica Houchin*, Kersten Nelson, Kelsey Wahlgren.

SOPHOMORES—Kaylee Beyea, Maddy Costello, Bailey Gibbens, Tylyn Haynes, Kenzie Hiebner, Amanda Larson, Jacey Wiggins*.

FRESHMEN—Megan Allard, Rebecca Anderson, Regan Geiken, Aryn Meisinger, Brooke Morton, Taylor Mroczek, Rachel Rice, Kennedy Wahlgren.

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