

Swedes finish fourth at SWC volleyball tourney

Written by Deb Egenberger
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VALENTINE—It all starts with a pass.

Gothenburg volleyball coach Becky Costello knows she's got capable setters and strong hitters who also provide a formidable force blocking at the net.

But to use those players, the Swedes must first pick up the pass.

Gothenburg struggled on defense and with serve receive Saturday in Valentine as the Swedes finished fourth in the Southwest Conference tournament.

"When we pass well, we're a pretty good team," Costello said. "When we don't, we can't make anything else happen either."

Gothenburg started the tournament with a win over Cozad 25-18, 25-22.

"We had a hard time getting started," Costello said, "but we played well enough to win."

McKenzie Geiken served 21-for-21 with 19 points and six aces against Cozad to lead the Swedes.

"Our serving kept Cozad off balance," Costello said.

Gothenburg moved on to meet Minden in the tournament semi-finals, only to falter 25-17, 25-11.

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“We started strong,” Costello said. “We were hitting well from both the right side and the left side.”

Gothenburg and Minden were tied at 15-15 before the Swede serve receive faltered and the Whippets went on a five-point run.

“We couldn’t get back into it and it carried over into the second set,” the coach said. “When you can’t get the ball to the setter, that means the setter struggles to put the ball at the net and then we can’t attack the way we want to.”

At the same time, Costello said the Swedes must get quicker and play scrappier on defense.

Gothenburg faced Broken Bow in the consolation finals for third and fourth place.

“Broken Bow got all the breaks in the first set,” Costello said as the Indians took the match 25-18, 21-25, 25-22. “And once you get down,

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