

## St. Paul proves to be Swede nemesis in 2010

Written by Greg Viergutz

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### Gothenburg avenges losses but fall short at district.

When members of the 2010 Swede softball team look back on this season, there will be plenty to be pleased about.

It's the lone Class C team that defeated them that will cause them the most regret.

Gothenburg closed out the 2010 campaign with a 17-12 record. Of the losses, eight came at the hands of Class A and B teams. When given the opportunity, the Swedes avenged all but three of the defeats.

"We only lost to one Class C team; the problem was that we lost to them four times," Swede coach Roger Neujahr said. "I guess that said maybe they were a little better than us."

Gothenburg played the Wildcats five times, losing four.

The Swedes dropped an extra-inning game to St. Paul in the regular season in what Neujahr described as a low point for the year.

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“We went to extra innings and just about won the ball game, but it seemed like our feet were in sand. We just didn’t have a good game,” he said.

Things were different in the rematch at the district tournament as Gothenburg won 6-0.

“We had close to a perfect game where we had good defense, good pitching, timely hitting and very good base running,” Neujahr said.



The Swedes failed to regain their focus after waiting for the Wildcats to battle through the loser’s bracket.

Homecoming festivities were later that night at Gothenburg and everybody was excited about that and the win.

“We didn’t refocus after that. I take the blame there,” the coach said.

St. Paul won consecutive games to earn their first-ever berth in the state tournament. The Swedes went home less enthused about Homecoming.

Neujahr said, upon reflection, the 17-12 record is understandable.

“When you lose a four-year starting pitcher, it makes it difficult,” he said. “When you compound that with losing a four-year starter as catcher, it’s extremely difficult to have a winning season.

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We were able to overcome that.”

The Swedes had to replace the four-year battery of Bre Messersmith and Vanessa Linegar. Senior Jordyn Haake and sophomore Amanda Barkmeier filled the bill on the mound, while Brittyn Munster settled in as catcher.

Seniors dominated the statistical categories. Shelby Eggleston led or tied for the lead in seven offensive categories. She also set or tied for two season records and four career marks.

Haake posted the best record (10-5), the lowest earned run average (2.87) and the best strikeout to walk ratio (63-11).

Roni Putnam showed that getting on base can turn in to runs. She set season and career marks in walks while also pacing the team in

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