

Indians hand Swede boys early exit from tourney

Written by Deb Egenberger

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OGALLALA—A minute can take an eternity to pass during a close basketball game.

Gothenburg boys coach Roger Koehler knew that despite a four-point lead with 1:14 to play in the Swedes' first-round Southwest Conference game at Ogallala, there was lots of time left for anything to happen.

"You need to be able to finish," he said.

But a series of plays that did not go Gothenburg's way meant the Swedes left the SWC tourney early with a 54-51 loss to the Indians.

"I still see a lack of experience, a lack of playing the game on their own," Koehler said. "We're too far into the season to say we lack experience but I think that's what it comes down to."

The Swedes led 26-25 at halftime and were ahead as many as five points during the third period before the Indians tied the score 36-36 heading into the fourth quarter.

"We did a good job of getting the ball inside to our big guys," Koehler said. "Korey (Ahlenstorf) and Logan (Koehler) passed the ball well from in there. We know we need to take advantage of

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our size.”

Midway through the fourth period, Ogallala took a 47-44 lead until Brett Dockweiler hit a three-pointer to tie at 47-47.

The teams battled back and forth bucket for bucket. At the one-minute mark, Brandon McMichael hit a field goal to give Gothenburg a 51-47 lead.

The score remained 51-47 until Ogallala senior Trevor Neill sneaked inside for a lay-up with 38 seconds left.

Logan Koehler got a shot at the free throw line on the next possession but missed the front end of the one-and-one.

“Then I think we fell asleep on defense,” the coach said.

| SWC TOURNEY | |
|--------------|---------------|
| First Round | |
| Valentine 53 | Broken Bow 48 |
| Ogallala 54 | Gothenburg 51 |
| Ainsworth 68 | Cograd 31 |
| Sweet-16 | |
| Minden 63 | Valentine 51 |
| Ainsworth 43 | Ogallala 42 |
| Consolation | |
| Valentine 58 | Ogallala 53 |
| Minden 88 | Ainsworth 47 |

Neill got inside again for another lay-up and was fouled with 9.7 seconds left on the clock. His free shot gave the Indians a 52-51 advantage.

The Swedes threw the ball away on the inbounds pass and were forced to foul to stop the clock.

Tyler Zoellner made both free throws to put Ogallala up 54-51.

“We drew up a play in the timeout and the kids executed it perfectly,” Koehler said. “We could

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have forced an overtime.”

But the three-point attempt by Dockweiler banged off the back of the rim.

“I thought we played better as a team than we have for awhile,” Koehler said. “That’s an encouraging sign, we just needed to

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