

Aggressive style earns 10-5 victory

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Swedes beat Cozad for only second time

Gothenburg set a tone early in the game Thursday that the Cozad Haymakers better be ready for a fast-paced contest.

Brittyn Munster brought that point home figuratively and literally in the opening inning. The senior catcher for the Swedes reached base on an error and wasted little time stealing second.

A ground ball by Emily Franzen was handled routinely for an out at first base, but Munster wasn't interested in doing anything routinely. She raced around third base and scooted home for a 1-0 lead before the Haymaker first baseman knew what was happening.

"It was a nice aggressive play," Swede coach Roger Neujahr said. "I was glad we got one run to put some pressure on them."

Putting pressure on the defense, embracing that risk/reward scenario, worked enough for Gothenburg to claim a 10-5 win.

The Swedes scored at least one run in every inning but the third. Their aggressive play put pressure on the Haymakers to make the perfect throw or pay a price. Twice left fielder Skylar Howell did just that, cutting down runners trying to score.

Howell later did her own damage at the plate, knocking a leadoff home run in the sixth inning. By then, though, her Haymakers needed more than just that.

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Gothenburg pitcher Amanda Barkmeier hit the right spots in all but two of the innings.

“I thought that was the best she has thrown with velocity ever,” Neujahr said.

She tweaked her curve ball by slightly moving her grip around the seams. It gave it considerable movement that confounded Haymaker batters, excepted for the fourth and sixth inning when a peel drop pitch didn't drop.

Barkmeier mowed through the batting order early, allowing just one base runner on her own throwing error while fanning seven of the first 11 batters she faced.

Then the Haymakers bats came alive with four consecutive singles that scored three runs to make it 7-4 Gothenburg.

The Swede senior got back on track allowing just the home run and a walk the rest of the way. She finished with 10 strikeouts.

Kyndal Holmes blasted her own home run, a line drive shot to lead off the seventh. She added a pair of singles.

The victory is just the second in school history over Cozad. The Swedes' only other win over the Haymakers came in the district tournament in 2009.