Loss to Sutherland only increases desire to win

COZAD—Gothenburg's winning streak on the volleyball court ended at 15 matches Saturday afternoon as the Sutherland Sailors avenged an earlier loss to the Swedes during the Cozad Invite.

"If we had to lose one, I guess it's better to lose to Sutherland now and get it out of the way instead of losing this week or next," said Swede coach Mary Clark.

Gothenburg ends the regular season at Ogallala on Friday with a triangular against Valentine and the Indians.

Then the C1-11 sub-district is Tuesday in North Platte and the Swedes have their sights set on making a statement.

"We're definitely going to have to come with our A game," Clark said. "I just don't think the girls are ready for this to be over."

Sub-district pairings will not be official until Thursday but Clark is sure the Swedes will be the second seed and face Chase County in the first round.

Gothenburg defeated the Longhorns (14-13) in a triangular last month.

Ogallala (22-10) will take the top seed, barely edging out Gothenburg, and will play Cozad (4-21) in the first round.

Start times have not been announced by the host school North Platte High.

The Swedes move to 21-4 on the year, the most wins of any Gothenburg volleyball team in school history.

Clark said she hopes the girls will learn from the loss to Sutherland on Saturday and use it to fuel their desire for the rest of the season.

“We just can’t play flat,” Clark said. “We were flat against Cambridge but that’s a team we could play average against and still win.”

The Swedes defeated the Trojans 25-12, 25-14 in the first match of the tournament.

Aryn Meisinger and Tiani Reeves recorded seven kills each while Taylor Mroczek and Regan Geiken picked up 11 digs apiece.

Then they went up against Sutherland, which is 19-6 on the year with a No. 4 rating in Class D-1 by the Omaha-World Herald.

Gothenburg beat the Sailors early in the season but couldn’t match their consistency on

Saturday.

Sutherland took the match 25-21, 22-25, 25-20.

“It seemed like we weren’t very focused,” Clark said. “The girls were up and down and all over the place and we had far too many errors on our side of the net. Uncharacteristic errors.”

Gothenburg had 23 hitting errors, 12 mistakes on serve receive and five missed serves.

“There was stuff happening, like balls just hitting the floor on our side of the net, that we haven’t seen all year,” the coach said.

But what’s important, she said, is that the Swedes were able to pull together, refocus and come back prepared to play Overton in the consolation match.

At 23-4 with a No. 7 rating by the World Herald in Class D-1, Overton had the top seed in the tournament but got beat by Valentine in the semi-finals.

“It could have gone either way against Overton,” Clark said. “We had to work our way into that game.”

The Eagles started the consolation match with a six-point lead in the first set as the Swedes worked to shake their inconsistency.

“It was like all of a sudden we were back to ourselves,” Clark said. “I am proud of the way the girls responded and took control.”

Gothenburg made beating Overton look easy, taking third place with a 25-12, 25-16 victory.

Jacey Wiggins was 17-of-19 hitting with 12 kills while Meisinger offered 10 set assists and Mroczek picked up 12 digs.