

Girls aim for sweet success

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Swedes hope to reverse poor shooting night

Apparently, the Gothenburg girls got themselves into a tainted batch of Sweet Tarts candy Friday night.

At least that's what Swede basketball coach Chris Lecher is hoping.

The girls shot their worst percentage of the season from the free throw line in their final regular season game against Ainsworth and had their second lowest percentage from the field as the Bulldogs pulled out a 43-37 victory.

Lecher says he hopes it's nothing more than defective shooting pills.

Before each game, the girls share a package of Sweet Tarts, the coach said.

"They call them their shooting pills. We must have gotten ahold of a bad batch."

The Swedes hit only 15-of-49 from the field for 31%. Their season average from the field is 41%.

Even worse, the girls made fewer than half of their free throws at 5-of-11 for 45%. They have averaged 65% all year.

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“We missed a lot of the front end of one-and-ones,” Lecher said. “That just hasn’t been a problem for us.”



Combined, Gothenburg’s poor shooting turned into a problem, especially in the third period.

The Swedes trailed 7-6 in the first quarter and were down just one 17-16 at halftime to the team they defeated in the Southwest Conference tournament championship for the title two weeks ago.

Gothenburg didn’t start off the second half too bad, trading the first couple of buckets with the Bulldogs.

But when Ainsworth sophomore Ellie Carr hit a three-pointer to put the Bulldogs up 22-20 with five minutes to go in the period, that was as close as Gothenburg could get the rest of the game.

Ainsworth outscored the Swedes 13-4 in the third quarter and pushed ahead by as many as 11 points before Gothenburg made a surge midway through the fourth.

“We had plenty of attempts,” Lecher said, “and a lot of them were good shot choices but for whatever reason they wouldn’t go in.”

Senior Jacey Wiggins and junior Regan Geiken led the Swedes with 11 points each while Carr was Ainsworth’s high scorer with 16 points.

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“It’s hard to beat a good team twice,” Lecher said, “but it’s not impossible.”

Ainsworth improved to 19-4 on the year and slipped into the Omaha World Herald Class C-1 rankings this week at No. 10.

Gothenburg finishes the regular season with a 13-10 record.

“We’ve won 10 of the last 12 games,” Lecher said, “and some of those wins were against pretty good teams.”

The Swedes know getting through the C1-11 sub-district this week won’t be easy.

They also know it’s not impossible. Gothenburg has beaten all three sub-district opponents already this year.



“I think if we take care of business and play our game we have as good a chance as anyone to win the sub-district,” the coach said.

He is hoping, too, that the girls have found a lucky box of Sweet Tarts.

The Swedes faced Chase County (7-17) in the first round of the C1-11 at Lexington on Tuesday

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evening. Results were not available at press time.

A win would pit Gothenburg against the winner of the Cozad-Ogallala game at 7 p.m. on Thursday in Lincoln.

The winner of the sub-district will play the winner of the C1-12 sub-district which includes Chadron (19-2), Kimball (13-5), Mitchell (12-10) and Gordon-Rushville (9-11).

Chadron is this week's No. 1 pick by the World Herald.