

Swede boys just short of the crown

Written by Austin Benson

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Gothenburg boys fall to Cozad in SWC title game

Gothenburg's boys basketball team managed to reach the Southwest Conference title game Saturday but their efforts came up short against an athletic Cozad team who has had the Swedes' number in both matchups this season.

Gothenburg beat Broken Bow in the first round of the SWC Jan. 27 and defeated Minden 40-37 in the semifinals Friday to meet up with the Haymakers who knocked off the No. 1-seed Ainsworth Bulldogs on a buzzer-beater.

Swedes handle Whippets

Gothenburg made it a point to get the ball in to Tanner Borchardt on the block against Minden as he took the first five shot attempts in the 40-37 win in the semifinals of the Southwest Conference tournament.

"Tanner had a big size advantage that we wanted to use in our favor," head coach Roger Koehler said.

Both the Swedes and Whippets looked to push the ball early after missed shot attempts but didn't find overwhelming success as the score was tied 9-9 after one quarter of play.

Minden led most of the second period but five points by Borchardt in the final 20 seconds deadlocked the game at 22-22 before a failed attempt by Nic Werner ended the half.

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Koehler said Gothenburg wanted to adjust its offense to take advantage of Minden's defense on the weak side.

"They were slowing the game down and we missed some opportunities in the first half because of their zone," Koehler said.

However, both teams came out cold in the third frame scoring a combined 10 points.

Minden didn't score for the final 4:45 in the third while Gothenburg's Collin Hahn hit a basket with 1:00 remaining to give the Swedes a 28-26 lead.

Continuous efforts to exploit Minden's zone broke through with Borchardt and Blake Ristine converting open layins.

Borchardt scored eight of his team high 20 points in the fourth quarter to help the Swedes maintain a lead until the final buzzer.

Cozad terrorizes Swedes



The Haymakers' speed and athleticism contained Gothenburg's offensive attack as Cozad defeated the Swedes 47-37 in the Southwest Conference championship Saturday.

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Gothenburg struggled shooting from the outside, head coach Roger Koehler said, in part because of Cozad's length.

"It was a very competitive game," he said. "Had we shot the ball better the outcome could've been different."

Going into the contest, Gothenburg's focus was to stop the dribble drive, Koehler said.

"For the most part we did that and I was pleased with our defense," he said.

But Cozad jumped out to a 12-6 lead after the first quarter and Gothenburg was forced to play catchup the entire game.

In the second frame, both teams scored 11 points and Gothenburg trailed by six at intermission, 23-17.

"At halftime we tweaked our zone defense a little bit and our man-to-man to keep up with them," Koehler said.

The Swedes came out of the break and reduced Cozad's lead to three as the Haymakers were outscored 11-8. Cozad led 31-28 going into the fourth quarter.

Gothenburg's success continued into the final period when the Swedes took a one-point lead that was countered by a Cozad three-pointer.

"Every time we pulled even or got close one of their players would make a three," Koehler said.

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Along with hitting outside shots, Cozad shot 10-16 from the free throw line in the fourth quarter to give them a 10-point margin of victory.

Once again Gothenburg was led in scoring by Tanner Borchardt's 17 points and 19 rebounds.

Cozad's Conor Young was its high scorer with 15 points.

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