

Gothenburg girls finish third

Written by Deb Egenberger

Wednesday, 03 February 2010 22:23 - Last Updated Wednesday, 03 February 2010 22:35



Swedes use SWC tourney as opportunity for growth.

Every time high school players step on the court throughout the basketball season, there is an opportunity for improvement and growth.

Gothenburg's girls took full advantage of those opportunities during last week's Southwest Conference tournament.

The Swedes acquired more than a third-place plaque from their three SWC games.

They came away with more confidence, stronger character and the belief they can win every game.

"The girls believe they can win," said Swede coach Tim Peterson. "They don't go in wondering if they can, they know they can. That's a huge step."

Gothenburg took third place in the SWC tournament with a win over Valentine in the consolation game Saturday afternoon.

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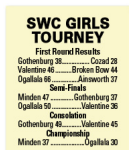
They defeated Cozad but fell to top-seeded and state-ranked Minden on their way to the third-place game.

“It was a good tournament for us,” Peterson said. “I think it helps set the tone for the rest of the season.”

Seeking revenge

Gothenburg’s coach never dreamed his girls would come out flat against Cozad in the first round of the SWC tourney at home on Jan. 26.

“You wouldn’t think after they beat us once that we’d just go through the motions,” Peterson said of Cozad’s six-point win at Gothenburg a couple weeks earlier.



SWC GIRLS TOURNEY	
First Round Results	
Gothenburg 38.....Cozad 28	
Valentine 46.....Broken Bow 44	
Ogallala 48.....Ainsworth 37	
Semi Finals	
Minden 47.....Gothenburg 37	
Ogallala 50.....Valentine 38	
Consolation	
Gothenburg 46.....Valentine 45	
Championship	
Minden 57.....Ogallala 30	

But the Swedes were stagnant in the first quarter, scoring only a pair of free throws to give the Haymakers a 10-2 advantage.

Cozad’s domination didn’t last long, though, as the Swedes pulled it together to manage a 38-28 victory.

“I took some people out and subbed some kids in who did a really nice job for us,” Peterson said. “When we got rolling and played with intensity, things worked for us.”

Kira Peterson opened the second period with a three-pointer and gave Gothenburg its first lead

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six minutes later with another long shot.

The Swedes finished the first half ahead 18-16.

“We knew they were going to sit back in a zone and double or triple team Emily (Max),” Peterson said. “To our credit, we still got the ball inside to her.”

And although she didn’t score big, Max made Cozad pay for ganging up on her.

Two Haymakers had three fouls each at halftime and another earned her second, third and fourth foul early in the third period.

“Because she is so lethal inside, Emily forces the other team completely out of their game,” Peterson said.

Cozad tied the score at 20-20 midway through the third and took a 26-21 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

Then Gothenburg took control, limiting the Haymakers to only two free throws the rest of the game.

The Swedes shot only 20% from the field and were 15-of-35 free throws.

“If we shoot better from the line, it’s a blowout and the game’s never in question,” Peterson said.

Max led the Swedes with 12 points and 10 rebounds. Ali Abramson and Kira Peterson added

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nine points each.

Everything but scoring

Wins and losses are measured by points on the scoreboard. Any other comparison may have left Gothenburg with a SWC semi-final win over Minden on Friday.

“We did everything we could have possibly done to beat them except put more points on the board,” Peterson said.

Minden advanced with a 47-37 victory sending the Swedes to the consolation round.



Peterson was not at all disappointed with the loss.

“We played good defense and we handled the ball well against their pressure,” he said. “We came out focused and with intensity and were able to play that way the whole game. We just didn’t shoot well enough to win.”

Gothenburg had a 10-8 lead after one period before Minden stepped up to take a 22-18 advantage at halftime.

“We forced them out of their man-to-man defense,” Peterson said. “Emily can’t be handled in single coverage and they tried to do that most of the first half.”

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In the third quarter the Whippets went to a 1-3-1 defense and caused Gothenburg more problems.

“We weren’t moving the ball as quick as we needed to,” the coach said.

The Swedes stayed within four points through the third period but Minden pulled away in the fourth.

“Minden is one of the best defensive teams we play,” Peterson said. “I think we did a good job of handling their pressure.”

Max finished with 23 points. Abramson contributed seven rebounds and five steals.

Character shows

After such a hard-fought game on Friday, Peterson said it could have been a bit difficult for his girls to get up for a consolation game Saturday afternoon.

“The kids showed a lot of grit and good character,” the coach said. “They went out and took care of business.”

Despite a high number of turnovers and a low free throw percentage, the Swedes handled the Badgers 49-45.

“It wasn’t really as close as the score looks,” Peterson said.

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But the score was tight through the first half. Gothenburg led 10-9 after one period and was ahead a slim 25-21 at halftime.

In the third period, the Swedes went to work to build as much as a 12-point advantage and were up 40-29 to start the final stanza.

“We had a little let-up in the fourth quarter,” Peterson said. “We gave up way too many easy baskets toward the end.”

Leading 11 points midway through the fourth, Valentine made a run.

With about two minutes left on the clock, the Swedes were up 49-39 after Kira Peterson hit a three-point shot.

Three turnovers and a pair of missed free throws later and the Badgers chopped the lead in half.

Whitney Willcuts hit two quick shots in the final 20 seconds to end the scoring.

Willcuts finished with nine points and teammate Michaela Petersen led the Badgers with 10.

Max was the game-high scorer with 27 points. She completed the double-double with 11 rebounds.

The win over Valentine moves the Swedes to 7-10 on the season and gives them a preview of what to expect this week.

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Gothenburg hosts Valentine on Friday for a girl-boy double-header prior to the coronation dance.

“They know what we’re about and we know what they’ve got,” Peterson said of the 9-9 Badgers. “As long as we play with the same intensity and focus that we did last week, we’ll be fine.”

GOTHENBURG 38					MINDEN 47					GOTHENBURG 49							
COZAD 28					GOTHENBURG 37					VALENTINE 45							
GOTH	FG	FT	PF	Rb PT	GOTH	FG	FT	PF	Rb PT	GOTH	FG	FT	PF	Rb PT			
A. Abramson	3-6	2-2	2	2	9	A. Abramson	2-7	0-1	2	7	4	A. Abramson	2-4	0-0	1	3	4
A. Clark	0-2	0-1	1	4	0	A. Clark	1-4	0-0	0	4	3	A. Clark	4-8	0-1	1	1	8
S. Eggleston	2-12	4-10	1	3	8	S. Eggleston	3-5	0-0	3	3	2	S. Eggleston	1-3	0-1	1	0	2
E. Max	3-8	6-14	4	10	12	E. Max	0-18	5-8	3	5	23	M. Gierke	1-2	0-0	0	1	2
T. Paul	0-2	0-2	2	4	0	T. Paul	1-2	0-0	1	3	2	E. Max	12-20	5-8	2	11	27
K. Peterson	2-30	3-6	3	4	9	K. Peterson	1-5	0-0	2	3	3	B. Munster	0-0	0-0	1	1	0
TOTALS	15-50	15-35	14	27	38	TOTALS	15-41	5-7	14	24	37	T. Paul	0-4	1-2	1	3	1
Three pointers: Gothenburg, Kira Peterson, 7; Al Abramson, 1; Cozad, 0.						Three pointers: Gothenburg, Kira Peterson, 1; Al Clark, 1; Minden, 1.						Three pointers: Gothenburg, Kira Peterson, 1; Valentine, Whitney Wilcoits, 1.					
Field goals: Gothenburg, 10-50, 20%; Cozad, 11-42, 26%.						Field goals: Gothenburg, 15-41, 37%; Minden, 10-50, 20%.						Field goals: Gothenburg, 22-43, 51%; Valentine, 21-40, 42%.					
Free throws: Gothenburg, 15-35, 43%; Cozad, 6-16, 38%.						Free throws: Gothenburg, 5-7, 71%; Minden, 10-18, 56%.						Free throws: Gothenburg, 4-10, 40%; Valentine, 2-5, 25%.					
Fouls: Gothenburg, 17; Cozad, 26.						Fouls: Gothenburg, 14; Minden, 8.						Fouls: Gothenburg, 10; Valentine, 14.					
Rebounds: Gothenburg, 11 offensive, 16 defensive, 27 total; Cozad, 10 offensive, 21 defensive, 31 total.						Rebounds: Gothenburg, 11 offensive, 13 defensive, 24 total; Minden, 11 offensive, 13 defensive, 24 total.						Rebounds: Gothenburg, 8 offensive, 18 defensive, 28 total; Valentine, 4 offensive, 10 defensive, 14 total.					
Turnovers: Gothenburg, 15; Cozad, 24.						Turnovers: Gothenburg, 23; Minden, 11.						Turnovers: Gothenburg, 10; Valentine, 14.					
Scoring by quarters: Cozad..... 10 6 10 2—28 Gothenburg..... 2 16 3 17—38						Scoring by quarters: Gothenburg..... 14 12 12 11—49						Scoring by quarters: Valentine..... 9 12 8 16—45 Gothenburg..... 10 15 15 9—49					