

Learning to believe

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Lack of confidence hampers Swede girls in 9-12 season.

In basketball—and in life—there’s a vast difference between hoping and believing.

That extra tidbit of confidence that comes when players are convinced without a doubt they will succeed can be what separates those who win from those who try hard.

Gothenburg girls basketball coach Tim Peterson said his 2009-10 Swede team had a strong work ethic and desire to win but lacked total confidence when they stepped on the court.

“As a whole, we did a lot of hoping for things instead of believing,” he said. “For example, you can’t take a shot hoping it will go in. You have to believe you’re going to make it when the ball leaves your hands.”

That mental capability is what separates potential from performance.

“The only thing that eats at a coach at the end of the season regardless of final record is if a team doesn’t reach its potential,” Peterson said.

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The Swedes ended the year with a 9-12 record and visions of what might have been.

Defensively, Peterson said the Swedes did well, holding opponents to an average of 45 points per game.

Offensively, he said, the team started solid but sputtered down the stretch.

“We couldn’t seem to get anything going from the outside,” Peterson said. “We didn’t generate much offense from anyone but Emily (Max).”

Max, a 6-foot senior post player, led the Swedes in scoring and rebounding averaging 19 points per game with nine rebounds.

She scored 401 points her final season as a Swede and surpassed the 1,000-point career mark with 1,001 total.

“She did a tremendous job inside,” Peterson said, “and all season she was getting double- and triple-teamed.”



The three-time all-conference player carves her name in the school’s all-time Top 10 records in nine statistical categories including points in a season and free throws made in a career.

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“Emily is as good an athlete as we’ve ever seen come through here,” Peterson said. “She definitely carried us through the last half of the season and she never stopped working to improve.”

But Peterson is quick to point out that Max did not play the game alone.

“These girls all knew where their bread was buttered,” he said. “A post player is only as good as the girls who get her the ball. This was a very unselfish team and that’s a tribute to their character.”

Three of the guards who fed the ball inside to Max are seniors as well. Ali Abramson, Tabitha Paul and Kira Peterson brought plenty of experience and leadership to the team.

“They’ve been playing together for a long time,” the coach said. “This is a core of girls who left their mark.”

2009-10 SEASON		
9-12 overall		
3-3 SWC*		
Opp.	Team	Opp.
42	at Hershey	54
42	Lexington	65
37	at Southern Valley	49
48	Perkins County	42
33	at Holbregge	56
COTTRENSBURG HOLIDAY TOURNEY		
54	Ord	38
42	Boone Central	58
33	at Minden*	49
47	Sutherland	37
36	at Centura	54
35	Cozad*	41
36	at Chase County	21
52	Broken Bow*	41
34	at Kearney Catholic	50
SWC TOURNEY		
38	Cozad	28
37	Minden	47
49	Valentine	45
51	Valentine*	39
52	at Ogilvie*	43
55	at Ainsworth*	37
C1-11 SUB-DISTRICT		
32	Cozad	51
858	Total	936
60.3	Ave. per game	44.6

Abramson and Kira Peterson notched their own spots on the program’s Top 10, both in three-point goals made in a career.

Despite a few disappointments, such as losing close games to Southern Valley, Cozad and Minden, Peterson said he is proud of the way his team played defense and the Swedes’ effort to cut down on turnovers.

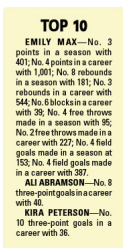
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“It may not have been noticeable to the average person, but we really got a lot better at protecting the ball,” he said.

That will be one key for Swede girls teams to come.



Another will be individual improvement in the off-season.

“The girls have to be committed to working on their weaknesses and improving their strengths over the summer,” Peterson said. “If we can make individual progress, improvement for the team as a whole will take care of itself.”

The coach said the girls must also build confidence in themselves and their teammates.

“It all starts with believing.”

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2009-10 INDIVIDUAL STATS													
	3 Point		3 Point		Free Throws								
	M-A	%	M-A	%	Pts.	Reb.	TO	PF	A	Bl	St		
All Abramson.....	15-60	25%	43-154	28%	32-52	62%	133	57	98	63	51	3	43
All Clark.....	1-3	33%	19-66	29%	6-17	35%	39	33	48	17	12	0	14
Shelby Eggleston..	1-13	8%	35-111	32%	15-38	42%	86	48	83	24	6	2	27
Karen Franzen.....	0-0	0%	3-14	21%	2-2	100%	8	9	6	3	3	0	3
McKenzie Gekko....	0-0	0%	1-5	20%	4-6	67%	6	2	6	4	0	0	0
Jordan Haake.....	0-1	0%	1-8	13%	3-4	75%	5	4	10	7	0	0	3
Emily Mack.....	0-1	0%	153-339	45%	95-164	58%	401	181	60	64	8	19	37
Brittyn Munster....	1-7	14%	4-22	18%	11-18	61%	20	11	13	21	6	0	8
Kersten Nelson.....	0-0	0%	0-4	0%	0-0	0%	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Tabitha Paul.....	0-15	0%	13-78	17%	17-31	55%	43	63	71	39	11	4	39
Kira Peterson.....	19-78	24%	27-114	24%	11-21	52%	84	70	55	63	43	4	27
Payton Phall.....	0-0	0%	3-4	75%	4-5	80%	10	7	13	5	1	0	3
Jacey Wiggins.....	0-1	0%	1-3	33%	0-0	0%	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
Janae Wiggins.....	1-1	100%	3-11	27%	0-0	0%	7	10	14	10	0	0	1
Kaitlyn Winter.....	0-0	0%	0-3	0%	0-0	0%	0	1	2	2	0	0	1
Taylor Wolf.....	0-0	0%	6-20	30%	2-9	22%	14	17	3	10	0	0	1
TOTALS.....	38-180	21%	309-944	33%	282-365	55%	898	515	454	332	141	32	208