Girls jump into ratings at No. 7

The Gothenburg volleyball team is quietly creeping into the spotlight.

With three wins in the Gothenburg Invite on Saturday, including a defeat over state-ranked Ord, the Swedes move to 14-3 on the season and jump into the Omaha World-Herald ratings at No. 7 in Class C-1.

It's a first for Gothenburg volleyball.

They didn't get there with a lot of hoopla and exuberant celebration on the court.

It's more of a quiet confidence.

"Each player has bought into her role on the team," said coach Mary Clark. "They play as a team because I genuinely believe they care about each other."

They care about winning too.

“This is a competitive bunch of girls,” Clark said. “It’s so exciting to see things finally going their way.”

Gothenburg also sits at No. 7 in the Nebraska School Activities Association point standings.

The Swedes opened the home tournament on Saturday against Ord, a 15-5 team led by Iowa State recruit Nicki Carson, a left-handed hitter/setter.

The first set went back and forth until Gothenburg gained an 18-14 lead.

The Swedes held the advantage to 21-17 and then Ord pulled closer until Gothenburg put the set away 25-23.

The second set was just as close with the score tied most of the way until the Chanticleers pulled out a 25-23 win.

The third set was more of the same until the Swedes put it away 25-22.

“The girls are learning not to be tentative, even when the game is on the line,” Clark said. “Our game is an attack game and we don’t play well any other way.

Jacey Wiggins had a triple double for the Swedes with 13 kills, 14 set assists and 11 digs.

Aryn Meisinger added 21 set assists while Maddy Costello picked up 12 digs and Regan Geiken put down 11 kills and five stuff blocks.

In the second match, Gothenburg faced 11-5 Holdrege.

“We knew Holdrege was going to be tough too,” Clark said. “They are an athletic team and they are very scrappy.”

In fact, the coach said, one rally during the match lasted over a minute and a half with the ball touched 38 times as it went back and forth across the net 26 times.

Sophomore middle hitter Tiani Reeves ended the rally with a kill.

“It was so much fun,” Clark said. “Nobody was going to be the one to let that ball fall.”

Gothenburg defeated Holdrege 25-16, 22-25, 25-15.

Wiggins led the way at the net again with nine kills while Meisinger offered 13 set assists and Costello picked up another 12 digs.

Gothenburg finished off the round robin championship with a 25-20, 25-21 victory over Perkins County.

“The girls passed well and communicated well all day,” Clark said.

Gothenburg's schedule loosens up a bit in the next couple of weeks. The Swedes will host a triangular with Lexington (0-21) and McCook (9-12) on Thursday and they won't play again until a head-to-head rematch with Southwest (10-8) on Oct. 11.

"It will be nice to get a little bit of a reprieve," Clark said, "but we know we can't look past any team."