

Arlington is difficult first-round state foe

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Gothenburg perhaps faces the toughest first-round opponent in the Class C State Softball Tournament.

The action starts at 3 p.m. Wednesday (today) at Hastings.

The Swedes, seeded No. 4 using the NSAA point system, faces No. 5 Arlington which brings a 22-7 record to state.

The Eagles make their second trip to state after winning two games last year before getting knocked out of the tournament by Fairbury, which had just eliminated Gothenburg.

“They have a very good pitcher,” Swede coach Roger Neujahr said. He’s referring to Sydney Miller who was 15-4 with an earned run average of 1.53 going into last year’s state tournament.

“People tell me she’s just as sharp if not sharper this year,” Neujahr said.

“According to the reports I’ve got, she throws a real good inside and outside drop. Those are tough because if you do get your bat on them, you’re going to be hitting a lot of ground balls. We’ve got about four girls in our lineup that aren’t ground ball hitters. We’ll have to adjust.”

Miller was also the top returning hitter on the team with an average of over .440 going into this season.

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The Eagles own four wins over Guardian Angels Central Catholic, which was a wild card qualifier for state.

First Round Games

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| #1 Wayne (25-4) 44.6552 pts. ave. | vs. | #8 Milford (15-14) 41.2414 |
| #4 Gothenburg (25-5) 43.5333 | vs. | #5 Arlington (22-7) 43.4138 |
| #3 Wahoo (28-6) 44.2363 | vs. | #6 Centennial (19-12) 42.8710 |
| #2 Fairbury (22-7) 44.5172 | vs. | #7 Guardian Angels C.C. (23-13) 42.778 |

If the Swedes get past Arlington, they'll likely face top-seeded Wayne, which brings a 25-4 record to state.

In other first-round matchups, Wahoo (28-6) faces Centennial (19-12) and Guardian Angels (23-13) plays Fairbury (22-7).

Gothenburg's state tournament batting lineup will look differently than for much of the season.

Pitcher Amanda Barkmeier, who has not held a bat all season due to injury concerns, faced a pitcher for the first time in the district championship game. She went 2-for-3.

Kyndal Holmes and Taylor Wolf, starters at the beginning of the season, are both back in action now.

Gothenburg hopes to improve on its 1-2 performance last year at state. The Swedes opened with a win over Raymond Central before dropping straight games to eventual champion Wahoo and Fairbury.

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First round consolation games will be played Wednesday at 8 p.m. Teams that win in the first round play at 12:30 Thursday. The championship game is set to start at 3 p.m. Friday.