Roger Koehler expected good shooters and full-court pressure when Kearney Catholic came to town Saturday night.

What he didn’t expect was a helter-skelter performance from his Swedes.

“We’ve been stressing all year the importance of taking care of the ball,” the Swede boys coach said. “We got caught up in other things. Instead of remaining calm and handling the ball well, we lost our heads.”

The Stars stomped the Swedes 78-43 after running out to a 24-5 lead in the first quarter.

“We tried playing them man-to-man because I knew I wanted to force them to shoot from the outside,” Koehler said. “Unfortunately, we weren’t quick enough to keep up and they got a lot of layups on us.”

Kearney Catholic’s perimeter shots also fell when Gothenburg switched to a zone with two Star three-pointers in the first quarter, three in the second and nine for the game.

“They’re a good shooting team,” Koehler said. “They execute their offense well.”

Kearney Catholic also took advantage of quick hands on defense, converting more than half of Gothenburg’s 27 turnovers into points of their own.

“They weren’t big,” Koehler said of the Stars. “But we never got the ball in to our big kids to score. We never got where we wanted to go.”

After hitting a couple of field goals and a free throw early in the first quarter, Gothenburg didn’t score again until Cody Ostergard was fouled and made the front end of a one-and-one about a minute into the second period.

The Swedes didn’t make a field goal until midway through the second and then went on an 8-2 run.

“We did some good things, we just didn’t do them consistently,” Koehler said.

The Swedes went to the locker room facing a 40-25 deficit after junior Jeramie VanAcker hit a three-pointer at the buzzer.

“We were searching for something, anything that would work,” Koehler said. “That’s the first varsity game Jeramie has played in and he did a very good job.”

The Stars came out on fire again in the third quarter out-scoring Gothenburg 24-6 in the period.

“They pretty much shot threes and lay-ups,” Koehler said. “Unfortunately, we didn’t challenge them much.”

Kearney Catholic finished with a 47%

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