A Class C No. 5 rating in the Omaha World-Herald didn't carry any weight in Gothenburg's quest for a fourth straight state softball tournament berth.

Neither did a fifth place ranking in the NSAA wild card point averages. Gothenburg needed to beat Cozad twice to reach the state tourney and the Swedes came up short.

Absent those victories, Gothenburg needed a little help from a friend, the Friend Bulldogs actually.

"What we needed to have was Friend win their district," Swede coach Roger Neujahr said. "They apparently had flu (at their school). How it affected their softball team, I don't know. Their football game was postponed."

The Bulldogs lost their opening game of the district and later to eventual tourney-champion Centennial. Ironically, Friend will face Centennial Wednesday (today) in the opening round of state tournament.

WILD CARD PTS.

Wahoo (28-3)	45.3871
Friend* (23-4)	44.5185
Cozad (19-6)	44.4400
Yutan/Mead* (25-6)	44.2258
Gothenburg (20-5)	44.0800
Wayne (26-4)	43.6000
Fillmore Central/ Exeter-Milligan (20-7)	43.3333
Twin River (22-8)	43.2143
Other State Tourney Qualifiers	
Centennial (19-14)	41.9091
Syracuse (17-12)	41.5172

* Wild card qualifiers

The Bulldogs' point average—the second highest in Class C—netted one of two wild card spots at state. The other went to Yutan/Mead which fell to Wahoo in the second championship game of the C-2 district tournament. The Patriots average ranked fourth in Class C to edge out Gothenburg for the wild card spot.

Neujahr thinks Cozad has a good chance to be successful.

“I’m going to go out on a limb and say that Cozad will be in the top three,” he said. “Between Wahoo and Wayne is my guess for the other top two.”

The Swede coach thinks his squad would compare favorably, too.

“I feel we are one of the top five teams in the state not playing our best but playing good,” he said. “If we are playing our best, I feel we are in the top three.”

The Haymakers face Twin River (22-6) in their opener.