

Hard hit flattens pitcher Barkmeier

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Swede coach Roger Neujahr didn't notice a game-ending double play Friday against McCook.

His eyes and concentration were focused on senior pitcher Amanda Barkmeier who had just been struck by a line drive off the bat of Madison Chitwood.

Shay Wear, playing deep at second base, went to her knees to catch the ball after it caromed off Barkmeier, and then threw to first baseman Emily Franzen before a base runner could get back to the bag.

"I didn't see either one of those things happen because I was worried about Amanda," Neujahr said. "(The ball) knocked her flat."

The coach was surprised to hear to the umpires approach the crowd around Barkmeier saying the game was over.

The hard-hit ball struck her in the lower left shoulder, narrowly avoiding a facial injury, and bounced high in the air.

Neujahr isn't taking any second chances on a re-occurrence.

"The next time you see us, we're going to have a new look because our corners (at first and second base) and pitchers are going to be wearing protective masks," he said.

The 7-2 win at McCook kept the team perfect for the season after the Swedes won 12-0 at

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Southern Valley Thursday.

Gothenburg is on the road again this week playing at Cozad on Thursday and in a tournament at Lexington Saturday.

Swedes overcome errors

Gothenburg didn't let six errors stop them from defeating the McCook Bison.

In fact, none of them came into play on the scoreboard as the Bison stranded seven and had three more runners turn into outs on the bases.

Shay Wear set the tone for the game for Gothenburg with a triple over the right fielder's head to lead off the game. Brittyn Munster doubled to give Gothenburg a 1-0 lead.

McCook answered with a pair of runs on the bottom of the first.

"The pitching coach (referring to himself) called the wrong pitches to about three straight batters and they had three of their five hits," Neujahr said. Some misplayed backups also hurt.

Barkmeier kept the Bison off balance the rest of the way allowing just two more hits.

Gothenburg regained the lead with a three-run fourth inning powered by Becca Riley's two-RBI single.

The Swedes added two more in the fifth and a single run in the seventh.

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Riley paced the offense going 2-for-3 with three RBIs.

Gothenburg rolls in opener

The Swedes needed to replace two additional starters before the first pitch was thrown this season.

Gothenburg didn't lose much to graduation, but an injury and illness kept two starters out of the season opener Thursday at Southern Valley.

Hannah Wolf suffered a gash in her throwing hand while trying to cover a ground ball in the team's intrasquad game the previous Saturday. Shay Wear wasn't feeling well when the bus took off for Southern Valley and it soon made a stop at Orscheln, where her mother works, to drop her off.

"Here we are without our shortstop and second baseman—kind of important positions—before the first game," coach Neujahr said.

Brittyn Munster was shuffled from behind the plate to Wear's spot at second base and Katlin Harm filled in at catcher. Ashley Eskew went to Wolf's shortstop position.

"We've talked about how other people have to be ready," the coach said. We practice that way. They were ready and did a great job for us."

Three hits, including Emily Franzen's RBI double, put Gothenburg on top 4-0 after one inning.

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Southern Valley's pitcher may have kept the Swedes off balance with batters going down in order, except for one walk, over the next three innings.

Gothenburg's bats came alive in the fifth with three consecutive singles scoring two runs. A flurry of Eagle errors and two hits produced six more runs in the sixth.

Three players had a pair of hits for the Swedes led by Kyndal Holmes going 2-for-3 with three RBIs.

Barkmeier gave up just three hits and fanned eight batters.