

Swede comeback falls short

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Haake says he wouldn't change choice to go for two

Hindsight may be 20/20 but even perfect vision wouldn't make Gothenburg football coach Craig Haake change his mind about what ended up being the determining play of the game Friday night.

The Swedes ate up large chunks of yardage against Broken Bow, dominating the Indians in every aspect of the game except one—the scoreboard.

Consistent running in the first half allowed the Swedes to put together three sizeable drives, including the first one of the game that was 15 plays and 59 yards long.

But Gothenburg came up short each time.

Broken Bow managed one sustained drive in the second quarter that ended with a 1-yard touchdown run and two-point conversion throw that put the Indians up 8-0 at halftime.

“We controlled the ball and we controlled the clock,” Haake said. “We were just on the wrong side of the scoreboard.”

After halftime, the Swedes gave up a huge kick return, landing the Indians inside Gothenburg territory from the start.

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Three minutes into the second half, Broken Bow scored on a 4-yard run and capped it with a PAT kick leaving Gothenburg to trail 15-0.

“I was impressed with our kids’ perseverance,” Haake said. “They never once let up.”

The Swedes got on the board at the open of the fourth quarter.

Gothenburg pushed quickly from the Swede 34 yard line into Indian territory, scoring on a 31-yard run by Logan Sheets just a few seconds into the period.

A two-point conversion run by quarterback Blake Ristine put the Swedes down 15-8.

Broken Bow sustained a long drive, pushing all the way to the Gothenburg 4 yard line before fumbling.

A recovery by Logan Koehler set up the comeback series.

With about three minutes to play, the Swedes executed a screen pass from Ristine to Zach Wolf and Wolf broke free for 51 yards.



Six plays later, Sheets was in the endzone again on a 6-yard run to pull Gothenburg within one, 15-14.

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The kicking team took the field.

“That’s typically what we do after we score,” Haake said.

Then he thought about it a second and took a timeout.

“The kids wanted to go for it,” the coach said. “Sometimes I listen to them and sometimes I don’t. I guess I wanted to show them that I believe in them.”

So Haake called the play and sent the team to the field.

“We’d gotten away with running a couple of traps,” Haake said. “That’s not by any means our bread-and-butter play but I thought we had one more in us.”

Ristine took the snap and handed the ball to Sheets, who was met by a host of Indians outside the endzone.

With 37 seconds left, Gothenburg still trailed 15-14.

But the Swedes hadn’t lost hope yet.

An onside kick worked perfectly and was recovered by Gothenburg at the 40-yard line.

Unfortunately, on the next play, Broken Bow intercepted a long pass by Ristine and the game was over.

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"I wouldn't change my decision to go for two if I had it to do over again," Haake said. "I'd just change the play I chose to call. Obviously we are disappointed and angry but it's a huge life lesson for all of us. You don't always get what you want and what you work for."

Sheets finished the game with 115 yards on 21 carries with both touchdowns. He also recorded 11 total tackles to lead the defense.

Ristine was 6-of-9 passing for 117 yards.

Gothenburg had 343 total offensive yards while holding Broken Bow to 177 yards of offense.

As much as he has played and re-played the end of the game, Haake said everyone realizes it's just one game and it's time to move on.

But the Swedes have a bye this week.

"It would be nice if we could wash that bad taste out of our mouths sooner," Haake said. "Instead, we have to let it sit for two weeks."

So Gothenburg (2-1) will use the extra time to refine some areas and get ready for Minden on Sept. 21.

"Broken Bow was a game where you could almost see some of those young kids grow up on the field," Haake said. "I think there are plenty of good things to come."