



Paulsen leads Cozad past Gothenburg

Jake Paulsen turned out to be everything on the football field that he has been billed to be. Maybe more.

Paulsen, a junior running back who captured state gold medals in the high jump and 100-meter dash last spring, racked up over 200 yards rushing in Gothenburg Friday night to lead his state-ranked Haymakers past Gothenburg 42-7.

He accounted for three of Cozad's touchdowns, including a 95-yard kickoff return in the fourth quarter.

Swede coach Craig Haake said his team attempted to limit his touches but it didn't seem to help.

"I think our guys were so busy waiting for him to make a move that he had us back on our heels," Haake said.

Paulsen didn't do any damage to the Swedes until the second quarter of the game.

Unfortunately, Gothenburg had plenty of internal struggles to start the game.

On the opening drive, the Swedes committed three penalties.

No answer

Written by Deb Egenberger
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“We were able to overcome the first one but the next two were back to back,” Haake said. “We can’t do that. We needed a clean game and we didn’t come anywhere close.”

The Swedes ended up with eight penalties that cost 45 yards and a load of momentum.



Gothenburg held Cozad to three-and-out on the Haymakers’ first drive, forcing them to punt. The Swedes then pushed to the Cozad 33-yard line just before the end of the quarter, but a 50-yard field goal attempt by Trenton Long sailed wide right.

“It’s too bad we couldn’t have gotten him a little closer,” the coach said.

It didn’t help that Cozad answered with an 80-yard scoring drive capped by a 55-yard touchdown run by Paulsen 30 seconds into the second quarter.

When Gothenburg fumbled the first handoff after the kickoff on the Swede 40-yard line, Paulsen needed only one play to find the endzone.

Suddenly Gothenburg trailed 14-0.

But the Swedes didn’t fold. Instead they took the kickoff and marched inside the red zone.

“We had a nice drive going,” Haake said. “We were at fourth-and-a-foot inside the 20, hoping to make it 14-7 going into the half and our lead blocker slips and the play dies. If he could have gotten where he needed to be, the hole would have been open and we might have scored. That really took the wind out of our sails.”

As it was though, the Swedes turned the ball over on downs and Cozad ate up much of the remaining clock, taking a 14-0 lead into halftime.

“It’s kind of the same thing we’ve faced all season,” Haake said. “We were able to move the ball, we just didn’t end up putting any points on the board.”

Cozad scored twice more in the third period, once on a 15-yard pass from Nate Bubak to Conor Young and again on a 16-yard pass from Bubak to Jacob Rush.

Heading into the final stanza, the Swedes faced a 28-0 deficit.

Gothenburg finally got on the board nearly three minutes into the fourth period.

After forcing the Haymakers to punt on fourth-and-11 at the Cozad 26, Swede sophomore Zach Wolf took the ball at the 37 yard line on the second play of the possession and marched in. A PAT kick by Trenton Long made the score 28-7.

But Paulsen would not be upstaged as he caught the ball on the kickoff at the Haymaker 5 yard line and cruised virtually untouched for 95 yards and the score.

Cozad added salt to the wound with another touchdown run by Colin Wetovik with 3:26 to play.

The Haymakers finished with 424 yards total offense compared with Gothenburg's 210.

"They sustained more drives against us than anyone else has," Haake said. "I came away impressed with their offense."

Logan Sheets led the Swede attack with 70 yards on 19 carries.

Gothenburg (3-2) now turns its attention to a road game at Chase County (3-2) on Friday.

Haake said the Longhorns look aggressive and physical with no tremendous size or speed but a variety of offensive formations.

"We're going to have to play responsibility football," he said. "When a team is playing the option as much as they're likely to play and they have a variety of people who will get the ball, that becomes even more important."

This will be a critical game, Haake said, if the Swedes hope to extend the consecutive years of playoff games to 11.

"We don't have any easy games left," he said. "This week is important."

Kickoff is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. MT in Imperial.