

Raising the bar to new heights

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Gothenburg boys hope to force mismatches with overall size

The Gothenburg boys basketball team's starting lineup could potentially tower to an average of nearly 6-foot-3 across the board.

With wingspan that matches height, in most cases, and speed to get up and down the court, Swede coach Roger Koehler thinks his team has what it takes to make some noise in Class C-1 this season.

"I feel really good about the kids we've got coming back and those who are stepping into new roles," he said.

With player heights at solid 6-8, 6-7 and 6-4, Koehler plans to create plenty of mismatches with opponents.

"We will also try to take advantage of our size to get the ball down the court quickly," he said. "We're going to look for quick movement and if it's not there, hopefully we'll be able to work the ball inside."

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But Koehler is well aware that opponents will be looking to pack the paint on his big kids Logan Koehler, Tanner Borchardt and Aaron Collins.

“We have some guards who can step in and hit some outside shots but we’re definitely going to have to develop that outside threat,” the coach said.

GHS VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL	
Nov. 29—at Lexington, 4:15-7 p.m.	Jan. 10—at Cozad, 4-7 p.m.
Nov. 30—HERSHEY, 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Jan. 11—CHASE COUNTY, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
Dec. 6—SOUTHERN VALLEY, 4-7 p.m.	Jan. 18—at Broken Bow, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
Dec. 8—at Perkins County, 1:30-4:30 p.m. MT	Jan. 23/24—SVC Tournament, TBA
Dec. 13—at North Platte St. Paul, 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Feb. 1—VALENTINE, 4-7 p.m.
Dec. 14—HOLLIBROOK, 4:30-6 p.m.	Feb. 2—at Minden, 3-6 p.m.
Dec. 27/28—Cabela's Holiday Shootout at Sidney, TBA	Feb. 8—AINSWORTH, 4-7 p.m.
Jan. 4—at Sutherland, 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Feb. 15—at 12 games, 5-6:30 p.m. MT
Jan. 5—CENTURIA, 3-6 p.m.	Feb. 18, 21—C-11 sub-district at Lexington, TBA
Jan. 8—ARAPAHOE, 4-7 p.m.	Feb. 25—District finals, TBA
	Mar. 7-8—State tournament at Lincoln, TBA

And while scoring is always the ultimate goal, the Swedes will focus on stingy defense, solid rebounding and unselfish passing.

Koehler said his three main goals for the team are:

Do the right thing on and off the court.

Win the rebounding battle every game. “I won’t be happy if we don’t with our size,” he said.

Finish every game with a positive assist-to-turnover ratio.

“We want to do a good job of taking care of the ball and making unselfish passes,” Koehler said. “But I’m also going to demand good defense.”

Gothenburg opens the 2012-13 season at Lexington on Thursday and the boys will host Hershey on Friday.

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Koehler said the Minutemen will be improved with virtually their entire team returning while Hershey faces a rebuilding year.

“We’ll just have to go play our game,” the coach said.

The Southwest Conference could be a difficult challenge. Koehler said he expects Cozad to be much improved, Minden to continue the Whippet tradition and Valentine to be salty again.

“I’m going to put us in the mix with all of that too,” he said.

As for the C1-11 sub-district, Chase County, Cozad and Ogallala will all be stronger than last year, he said.

“The thing is, all of our kids see the big picture,” Koehler said. “We have at least 10 guys we can play and not feel the least bit out of joint. They’re all on board with what we want to accomplish. That’s a good start.”

Tipoff for Friday’s home opener is set for 7:30 p.m.

Members of the 2012-13 Gothenburg boys basketball team are (*denotes letter winner):

SENIORS—Aaron Collins*, Logan Koehler*, Jake Matthies, Logan Sheets*.

JUNIORS—Nathan Graham, Trenton Long*, Ross Ostendorf, Blake Ristine*, Roy Slack, Adam Speck.

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SOPHOMORES—Tanner Borchardt*, Jacob Clark, Jacob Franzen, Jake Peterson, Connor Schwanz, Levi Tripp.

FRESHMEN—Ethan Bihlmaier, Ziek Brian, Braedon Brundage, Matt Bruntz, Dylan France, Marcus Fritton, Alex Jorgenson, Bryce Kowalewski, Drake Langley, Patrick Messersmith, Riley Ostendorf, Ryan Rehback, Caleb Rice, Skyler Schwanz.