Gothenburg boys use size advantage to beat Hershey

After losing an overtime game the night before, Gothenburg boys basketball coach Roger Koehler worried how his team might bounce back, both physically and mentally.

Maybe, Koehler said, the Swedes just needed to get a game under their belts to pull it all together.

Gothenburg had no trouble defeating Hershey 53-39 at home Friday night.

“I wondered about their legs,” the coach said, “but they seemed to handle it all quite well.”

Gothenburg cruised early with an inside-outside combination that put the Swedes up 14-8 at the end of the first quarter.

Post players Logan Koehler and Tanner Borchardt seemed to dominate the paint against the shorter Panthers but it was Swede guard Blake Ristine who provided the early spark, scoring eight of his 12 points in the opening period.

“Our bigs were dominant, no doubt,” the coach said, “but the kids did a good job of moving the ball around.”

The score was tied 4-4 in the first period before Gothenburg went on a 12-0 run.

Hershey couldn't make much happen after that as the Swedes held the Panthers to five points in the second quarter while pushing ahead 27-13 at halftime.

"Hershey is going to play hard all the time," Koehler said. "They're coached well and that's just what kind of team they are. But they simply didn't have anything to counteract the success our big guys were having."

Even when Hershey held the Swedes scoreless for six minutes to start the third quarter, there was never a question of control.

"The kids were able to stay composed despite the pressure," the coach said. "That's something we didn't do very well the night before."

Logan Koehler led the scoring effort with 17 points.

Tanner Borchardt pitched in 11 points and 10 rebounds.

Ristine finished with 12 points and five assists.

The Swedes move to 1-1 on the season as they host Southern Valley on Thursday before

traveling to Perkins County Saturday.

The 2-0 Eagles were pre-season ranked No. 8 in Class C-2 by the Omaha World-Herald.

“They had a lot of success last year and have a lot of kids back,” Koehler said. “It will be a good challenge for us.”

Tipoff is set for approximately 7 p.m.

Perkins County has had an 0-2 start to the year with a much smaller lineup than Gothenburg’s but Koehler said playing at Grant poses extra problems.

“It’s a tough place to play,” he said. “There’s a lot of tradition in that gym.”

Saturday’s game is set to begin at 4:30 p.m. MT.