

Swede boys eliminated from SWC tourney early

Written by Deb Egenberger
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MINDEN—The Gothenburg boys beat Minden’s press without much difficulty in the first half of last week’s Southwest Conference tournament opener on the road.

The Swedes moved the ball, found open shots and maintained a lead throughout the first two quarters.

But when the turnover bug bit, it clamped down hard and the Whippets took advantage of it.

Minden came back in the second half to defeat Gothenburg 52-46 and eliminate the Swedes from the tournament on Jan. 22.

“They ratcheted up their pressure,” said Swede boys basketball coach Roger Koehler. “One error seemed to lead to another and before we knew it we were in trouble.”

Gothenburg led 13-8 as time was running out in the first quarter but a three-pointer by Minden at the buzzer closed the gap for a 13-11 Swede advantage.

Gothenburg pushed ahead by as many as nine points with three minutes left in the first half.

Koehler said then Minden took advantage of two straight Swede turnovers, a missed shot without a rebound and another turnover to inch within one at the break.

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Gothenburg led 23-22 at halftime.

“The errors just seemed to compound,” the coach said.

The Swedes made the first shot of the third period before a real deer-in-the-headlights look took hold, Koehler said.

Five consecutive turnovers, an offensive foul call and two more turnovers gave Minden eight straight Gothenburg possessions without a bucket.

“We went from being up nine points to trailing by eight or 10,” Koehler said. “And the frustration just continued to mount. Take away that run of bad luck and we played right with them.”

SWC BOYS RESULTS	
First Round	
Minden 52 - Gothenburg 48	Ainsworth 73 - Opaluga 54
Broken Bow 91 - Cozart 55	
Semi-Finals	
Minden 54 - Valentine 45	Ainsworth 75 - Broken Bow 42
Consolation	
Valentine 67 - Broken Bow 29	
Championship	
Minden 73 - Ainsworth 55	

Gothenburg gave up 18 Whippet points in the third quarter to the Swedes' eight to trail 40-31 heading into the final frame.

Three Swedes scored in double figures, led by Tanner Borchardt with 20 points and 12 rebounds.

Blake Ristine added 14 points and Logan Koehler had 12.

Minden ended up winning the SWC tournament with a 73-55 victory over Ainsworth in the championship on Saturday.

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“We are so close,” the coach said. “Take away half the turnovers in that stretch and we win. We’re that close to getting over the hump.”

Gothenburg falls to 6-10 on the year.

Koehler said the key to finding success in the remainder of the season will be flipping the confidence switch.

“That’s going to have to come from within,” he said. “I can’t do that for them.”

Gothenburg will get another shot at the Whippets (9-9) as the Swedes travel to Minden again on Saturday after having hosted Valentine on Friday.

Koehler said Valentine (11-3) is an athletic team that will play a 2-3 match-up zone the Swedes have not seen yet this year.

“We’ll have to try to attack the high post and overload some areas,” he said.

Tipoff Friday is set for 7 p.m.

“We’re playing with the good teams,” Koehler said. “Now it’s time to make the jump toward winning those games.”