Valentine boys use Gothenburg's sluggish start to their advantage

A week and a half away from the court may have caused a little rust for the Swede boys.

Like an engine left out in the cold, it took a few cranks and several lineup changes for the team to get rolling Friday night.

Even then it was too little, too late as Valentine downed Gothenburg 58-35.

"I have to think that a week and a half of lay-off had a little to do with it," said boys basketball coach Roger Koehler. "It didn't feel like we were ready to go and I sure didn't see that coming."

The Badgers jumped out to an 8-0 lead in the first two minutes of the game before Gothenburg finally got on the board with a free throw by sophomore Tanner Borchardt.

Borchardt and senior Logan Koehler shared all of the points in the first quarter as Gothenburg trailed 15-9 after one.

The Swedes continued to struggle in the second period making 2-of-10 field goals to Valentine's 15 points.

Gothenburg trailed 30-13 at halftime.

“We were entirely out of sorts,” the coach said. “At one point, we had four people around one Valentine guy with the ball and we just looked at each other while he stepped between us to take it to the hole. We can’t be timid.”

Koehler attempted several modes of motivation, he said, including starting five bench players for the first minute of the third quarter and forcing the regular starters to watch.

Offensive output improved after the starters returned to action but midway through the third the deficit had reached 38-13 and the Swedes didn’t have enough power to catch up.

Logan Koehler had eight points in the third period to lead the comeback effort but there was not enough time for Gothenburg to make up ground.

Borchardt led the Swedes with 13 points and 14 rebounds while Logan Koehler finished with 12 points and five assists and Blake Ristine chipped in 10 points.

“It was not a good game for us all the way around,” the coach said. “Overall, it was not the effort we expect day in and day out, although it did get better in the second half.”

Anthony Fast Horse was Valentine’s leading scorer with 18 points. Austin Belin had 13 and Matt Kluender put in 12.