

Patriots spoil Swedes' play at Lex Invite

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Gothenburg's softball team suffered its lone defeat Saturday at the Lexington Invitational to a team that is on the rise.

After breezing past Alliance 15-0 in the opener, the Swedes ran into a tough Adams Central squad in the second round, losing 5-2. Gothenburg bounced back with an 11-2 win over the host Minutemaids in the consolation game.

Gothenburg returns to Lexington Thursday for another game. The Swedes travel to the McCook Invitational on Saturday.

Alliance out-matched

Gothenburg held the advantage in all phases of the game against Alliance.

The Bulldogs had just one ball reach the outfield, that being a single up the middle in their final at-bat of the game. A base runner was thrown out at the plate when the throw was relayed from center field.

"We responded with the correct relay," Swede coach Roger Neujahr said. "It's something we've been working on."

Gothenburg jumped out to a 9-0 lead after one inning. Seven hits, including a double by Becca Riley, fueled the rally.

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Six more Swede runs scored in the second inning. Tish Winter hit an RBI double and Josee Hotz drove in a pair with a single.

"We showed patience at the bat," Neujahr said. "When you know you're going to see slower pitching it's tough at times. We did a good job with that."

The easy win provided an opportunity for all 18 Gothenburg players to see action.

Pitcher dominates



Adams Central's Josee Bumgardner held the Swedes to just three hits. The junior right-hander fanned eight and walked three.

"She is the best pitcher we've seen this year," Neujahr said. "She threw hard and we just didn't react to her pitching. The second and third time around we got better at that."

The Patriots, now 7-1, struck quickly in the first inning with four hits that produced just two runs.

Adams Central added two more runs in the second inning that came after a drive-stalling double play. That third out proved to be elusive for Gothenburg. One run scored on a single and another on a wild pitch.

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"They kind of nickel and dimed us with a bloop hit here and a bloop hit there that kind of hurt us," the Swede coach said. "They've got a new coach who knows the game. Anytime they got somebody on base with a first-and-third situation they would steal second. They would score on a ground ball."

Three more singles produced another Adams Central run in the top of the fourth inning.

The Swedes finally got their timing at the plate in the bottom of the fourth. Three of the first four batters singled and the fourth walked. However, the Pats turned a double play that was followed by a ground out to end the rally with just two runs scored.

Kerry Wellmann started that double play but it came after a great at-bat, Neujahr said.

"It was a 3-2 count and she fouled off three or four pitches," he said. "She hits a line drive where the shortstop is headed to center field. (The shortstop) sort of dives and makes the catch. It took her right to second base."

She doubled off Ashley Eskew who couldn't react to the play quickly enough. Kyndal Holmes, who had singled earlier, had to hold at third.

"If that gets through, it's 5-4," Neujahr said. "We would have got some momentum and who knows (what would happen). It didn't happen. That was probably the big play of the game. They made the play and took us out of a big inning."

Three strikeouts in the fifth kept the Swedes from posting a late rally.

Holmes and Eskew each stroked RBI singles for Gothenburg.

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Helping the Patriots were two players with ties to Gothenburg. Kirsten Abbott and Meredith LaMaster, daughters of former Gothenburg residents, both singled in the game.

Big inning boosts Swedes

An eight-run third inning by Gothenburg seemed to puncture any hopes for a Minutemaid victory.

"An eight-run inning makes it a lot easier," Neujahr said.

He added that the Minutemaids seemed to lose some spark after that third inning rally got going.

"It was fairly easy for us," he said. "I'm sure Thursday night (Lexington coach) Chris Mroczek will have them ready for us."

Becca Riley's RBI double and a run-scoring single by Kyndal Holmes put the Swedes up 2-0 after one.

Lexington scored a solo run in the second on a single, an error and a ground out. Gothenburg answered when Kasey Wellmann singled and then scored on a sacrifice bunt by Katlin Harm.

Gothenburg's big rally in the third inning came on only three hits. Five walks and a couple of errors kept the rally going. Emily Franzen's two-run single was the big hit of the inning.

Karleigh Kleinknecht finished a good week of pitching with a complete game victory.

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“Karleigh pitched another good game for us,” Neujahr said. “She pitched nine innings during the week and gave up one earned run.”

Ashley Eskew's two hits led the team.