

Two straight losses send Swedes home

Written by Greg Viergutz

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Gothenburg couldn't put together a complete game and that's what made the difference in a pair of losses forcing an early exit from the Class C state softball tournament Thursday at Hastings.

The Swedes out-hit their opponent in the opening game 11-7, but six errors led to eight unearned runs and a 9-5 loss to eventual champion Wahoo. It marked Gothenburg's third consecutive first-round loss to the eventual Class C champ.

The error problem was remedied in the second game with just one committed. However, Gothenburg managed only two hits in an 8-0 loss to Fillmore Central/Exeter-Milligan.

The Swedes close out the season with a 19-9 record.

Mistakes doom Swedes

Two four-run rallies for Wahoo were fueled by Gothenburg errors in a 9-5 loss to the Warriors.

The Swedes actually took the lead early. Katlin Harm led off the game with a single. She came home on a double by Emily Franzen, who scored two batters later when Ashley Eskew singled.

Wahoo got one of the runs back in the bottom of the first on two singles and a ground ball.

Walks to Kylee Beyea and Becca Riley in the second were followed up by an RBI single by

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Franzen to make it 3-1.

The Swedes could have gotten out of the second inning with that lead intact. However, two errors and a throwing mistake kept the rally alive for the Warriors.



Wahoo led off with a single by Rachel Stratman. She was forced out at second on a fielder's choice. Kelsi Anderson lined out to pitcher Karleigh Kleinknecht, but Kleinknecht's throw to first for the double play pulled first baseman Franzen off the base.

After a walk, Wahoo's Michaela Miller drove in one run with a single. Then, a dropped pop fly at second base allowed two more runs to score. Another error gave the Warriors one more run before the inning ended with Wahoo on top 5-3.

The errors continued to haunt the Swedes in the third inning. Three out of the first five batters reached base on errors. Four runs scored with just one hit.

A switch in pitchers plus just one more error the rest of the way helped blank the Warriors in the final three innings.

Senior Rebecca Anderson, who uses more off speed pitches, entered the game for the final two outs of the third inning. She gave up just one hit the rest of the way.

"Rebecca really had them off key," Swede coach Roger Neujahr said.

Gothenburg had a scoring opportunity in the fourth inning. Katlin Harm opened with a double

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and reached third base before being stranded.

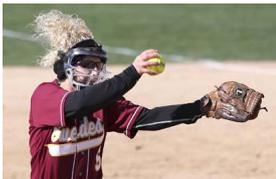
The Swedes scored a pair of runs in the sixth. Kaitlyn Aden and pinch hitter Ebony Anderson both singled and both scored on a single by Becca Riley.

Wahoo, a veteran team with seven senior and two junior starters, used excellent defense to hold down Gothenburg's rallies. First baseman Shauna Tweedy made a couple of over-the-shoulder catches in foul territory to take scoring chances again from the Swedes.

"I knew they were going to be solid defensively," Neujahr said. "I knew we weren't going to get many unearned runs."

Franzen led Gothenburg with a double and two singles. Harm added a double and a single.

Hits hard to come by



Gothenburg didn't have any trouble getting the bat on the ball in an 8-0 loss to Fillmore Central/Exeter-Milligan.

The problem was that most of the time the hits were pop ups for outs. In fact, of the 15 outs in the game for Gothenburg, 10 were pop flies that were caught.

Panther pitcher Morgan Uldrich threw an effective ball that naturally broke up and in a little bit, Neujahr said.

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“That’s what happens when the ball comes up and in on you. You’re going to pop it up,” he said. “I can’t think of a pitcher similar to her that we faced during the year.”

The FC/E-M senior gave up just two hits. Emily Franzen opened the second with a single and didn’t move after three straight pop ups.

Kerry Wellmann doubled to start the fifth and stole third. A strikeout and two pop flies ended the threat.

The Swedes came out emotionally drained from the first game and couldn’t get any spark going. The coach accepted the blame for that.

“We didn’t have any life and fire, I didn’t think,” Neujahr said. “That’s my job. I’m responsible for that and I didn’t get it done.

“Once that momentum has shifted, you just can’t get it back. It’s a struggle. It’s an absolute struggle to get it back. I didn’t have any magic words.”

The Panthers scored in all but the second inning. They took a 2-0 lead after one and doubled it in the fourth inning. A single, double and home run powered a three-run fourth inning.

Fillmore Central loaded the bases in the fifth frame on a single, a hit batter and a walk. Two plays at the plate forced runners before the game ended early with a run-scoring single.