There was no secret to what Gothenburg had to do in order to beat the No.2-ranked Cozad Haymakers on Nov. 12 and advance to the state semifinals.

Stop Jake Paulsen.

Unfortunately, the Swedes were up against a task that hadn't been accomplished all season as Paulsen led the undefeated Haymakers through the regular season and the first two rounds of playoffs

Against Minden and No. 8-ranked Pierce the senior speedster ran for 425 yards on 26 carries at a mind-blowing average of 16 yards per rush.

His success continued last Tuesday as he rushed over 200 yards for the sixth time this season propelling the Haymakers past Gothenburg, 34-9.

The Swedes end the season with an 8-3 record. The Haymakers advanced to play Boone Central/Newman Grove Tuesday.

A Cozad drive challenged the Swedes immediately in the first quarter but Blake Ristine nearly picked off a pass ending a nine-play Cozad drive at the 34 yard line.

Gothenburg handed the ball to Zach Wolf four times on its first possession.

Wolf and company gained 40 yards before the drive stalled and Trenton Long kicked a 43-yard field goal giving the Swedes a 3-0 lead with 4:55 left in the first quarter.

A short punt gave Cozad great field position at Gothenburg's 39 to start the second quarter.

The Haymaker duo of Jake Paulsen and Alex Boryca shared carries down to the 13 yard line.

Paulsen's third carry of the drive broke through for a touchdown.

On the ensuing PAT attempt, Ristine came through and blocked the ball and the Swedes trailed, 6-3.

Gothenburg and Cozad traded two more possessions before a costly interception thrown by the Swedes gave the ball back to the Haymakers near midfield.

Paulsen ran five consecutive times in the two-minute drive, scoring from the five.

Cozad went for two and capitalized giving the Haymakers a 14-3 lead at half time.

"We gave them the ball with a short field right before half," head coach Craig Haake said. "We ran a play specifically set up for their defense and they changed on us, and intercepted the pass which led to a touchdown."

Both teams were stagnant on offense after Gothenburg received the second-half kickoff.

Two three-and-out possessions ended with a pass on third and four skipping off the fingers of Ristine.

Long attempted a 38-yard field goal with plenty of distance, but the ball flew left of the goal.

Cozad took advantage quickly as Paulsen took the ball 73 yards to the endzone, extending the Haymaker lead, 20-3.

“That was the game on that play,” Haake said. “That put us down three scores and we had no momentum.”

Cozad fielded a punt to start the fourth quarter and began its drive at the 37 yard line.

Using three minutes of valuable time, the Haymakers marched 63 yards.

Colin Wetovick capped the drive with a 10-yard sweep adding to the deficit for Gothenburg.

The Haymakers led 28-3 after a successful two-point conversion.

The Swede offense moved the ball in their next possession before a second-and-20 pass attempt was intercepted at the 40 yard line and retuned to the house by Cozad's Wetovick. The Haymakers were up, 34-3.

With 2:59 left in the game, Gothenburg scored its first touchdown on a four-yard run by Roy Slack capping a seven-play drive that included a 51-yard reception by Dalton Sylvan.

Offensively, Zach Wolf carried the load running the ball 18 times for 102 yards.

Defensively Trenton Long led the team with 11 tackles while Skyler Kottwitz, Adam Speck, Tanner Borchardt and Dylan Folkers each had eight.

abenson@gothenburgtimes.com

308-537-3636