Gothenburg girls basketball coach Chris Lecher is known for joking around during a week of practice or before games last season.

In fact, he attributes much of the team's success a season ago on his reputation.

"It's a way to get them to calm down and have fun," he said.

He plans to use that tactic in his second season as head coach as well, but all the joking stops once the girls step on the court.

"We've talked about getting off to a good start and playing physical," Lecher said. "We want to be the bully on the block instead of being the team being pushed around."

Lecher said last year the Swedes developed a mentality used to winning and with his system in place for a second season, the girls have taken to it quicker.

"We got so much done this first week because the girls know what we want to do," Lecher said. "We have to worry about ourselves and take care of business."

With all the positive things the Swedes have to look forward to, Lecher knows Gothenburg has to figure out how to replace the experience that graduated last season.

"The team lost a lot of experience," Lecher said, referring to Brittyn Munster, Taylor Wolf and

Jacey Wiggins. “A couple girls have shown they want to step up.”

The Swedes do, however, have an athletic team, led by second-team all-conference player Regan Geiken.

Lecher said he thinks the team will do well if she does well.

“If Regan goes, the team will go,” Lecher said. “We have talked about some inconsistencies she had last year and this year they shouldn’t be seen.”

The more athletic, more agressive Swedes will use some new things offensively as well as new defensive pressure that allows the girls free rein, Lecher said, to compete for another Southwest Conference Tournament championship.

In his mind, Lecher said Minden is the preseason favorite because of two senior sisters who have already signed Division I letters of intent while their freshman sister joins the team.

But last year the Whippets were the No. 1-ranked team in the state before the Swedes beat them on their floor.

“Anything can happen. We just have to play ball,” Lecher said.

With the work the team put in over the summer in a skill development camp and the new “refuse to lose” attitude, the Swedes look to impress.

“I hope people come watch us play because they will enjoy it,” Lecher said. “I look forward to the season. It’s going to be fun.

Members of the 2013-14 girls basketball team are (*denotes returning letter winners):

Seniors—Megan Allard, Emily Franzen*, Regan Geiken*, Kyndal Holmes*, Taylor Mroczek* and Aryn Meisinger*.

Juniors—MaKaela Franzen, McKinley Harm and Amanda Kowalewski*.

Sophomores—Sarah Brown, Blaire Gibbons, Katlin Harm, Emily Keiser, Keely Lecher, Kim Whiting and Mady Vogel.

Freshmen—Kaitlyn Aden, Ebony Anderson, Tasia Borchardt, Deidra Goodall, Andie Geiken, Josee Hotz, Karleigh Kleinknecht, Kylie Koehler, McKenna Peterson and Jaci Teahon.

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