

Last-second shot falls short for boys

Written by Deb Egenberger
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With 17 seconds left on the clock Friday night, Gothenburg boys basketball coach Roger Koehler called a timeout and diagramed a play that easily could have pushed the game with Ainsworth into overtime.

Down 58-55, there was plenty of time for the Swedes to work for an open three-point shot and the tie.

The boys executed the play, ran just enough time off the clock and put the ball in Blake Ristine's hands just behind the three-point line.

Unfortunately for Gothenburg, the shot didn't fall and the Bulldogs walked away with a win.

It shouldn't have come down to a last-second shot, though, said Swede coach Roger Koehler.

"We've got to find a spot where we can get things clicking for all four quarters," Koehler said.

The Swedes started strong, jumping out to a 10-0 lead before the Bulldogs hit the first of their 10 three-pointers at the 2:15 mark of the first quarter.

After that, it was a three-point show by Ainsworth, which connected on 10-of-27 attempts.

"They live and die by the three," Koehler said. "That night, they got enough of them to win."

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But it wasn't by any fault of the Swedes, who put a hand in every Ainsworth player's face behind the arch.

"It's not like we just gave them open looks," the coach said. "We were there every time."

Gothenburg led 14-10 at the end of the first quarter and had a 31-22 advantage at halftime.



The Swedes didn't get soft on defense in the third quarter, Koehler said. Ainsworth just had better luck shooting.

"They started penetrating more aggressively," he said, "and they were getting some shots to fall that probably wouldn't normally go."

The Bulldogs outscored Gothenburg 21-12 in the third period, finishing the quarter with a 43-43 tie.

The Bulldogs only made one three-pointer in the fourth period and were 5-of-13 from the field overall but it was enough to pull out the win.

Swede sophomore Tanner Borchardt used his size to get 22 points, 18 rebounds and four blocked shots to lead the way for Gothenburg.

Logan Koehler added 16 points and 11 rebounds while Logan Sheets dished out six assists.

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"It's kind of the same song different verse," the coach said. "We played really well in some parts of the game just like we have in almost every game so far. We've just got to get a complete game out of everyone on the same night."

With the loss, the Swedes fall to 6-13 on the season.

"Record-wise we're not where we want to be but the effort is excellent and we're not done yet," Koehler said.

The boys have one regular season game remaining at Ogallala on Friday. The Indians are struggling at 2-17 on the year.

"Ogallala is a tough place to play. We fully expect to get their best game," Koehler said.

Tipoff is set for 6:30 p.m. MT.

Then Gothenburg moves into the post-season as the C1-11 sub-district begins in Lexington on Tuesday.

The Swedes are the No. 3 seed and will face Chase County (9-13) in the late game at 7 p.m..

"We're 1-1 with them," he said. "They'll play us hard and we might be the underdog but I like our chances."

The winner will play in the finals on Feb. 21 against the winner of the Cozad-Ogallala game.