By Russ Pankonin
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The opening weekend of the boys' basketball season didn't prove kind to Coach Carl Zuege and his team.

In the opener last Thursday, the Longhorns lost to Cozad 47-49 on a buzzer-beater with 0.6 seconds left.

On Friday, they could never quite close the gap against an athletic McCook team, falling 44-58.

Zuege said he felt they should be at least 1-1, noting they let the Cozad game get away.

He said his team performed at a typical first-game level. A big factor proved to be their inability to finish plays, whether it was in the first quarter or the fourth quarter, he added.

Despite suffering a second loss Friday, Zuege felt much better about the way his team played against McCook.

He said his team was always in the game. However, he said they need to do a better job of taking care of the ball and be more patient on offense.

That's especially key against teams like Cozad and mcCook who like to pressure all over the floor.

Zuege liked the tempo his team kept on defense against McCook. They played man-to-man the entire game and applied good pressure all night.

Offense has to get better

The focus for practice this week will center on the offense. Simply put, Zuege said, "Our offense has to get better. You're not going to win a lot of games with 45 points."

He wants his team to do a better job of moving the ball around on offense. That means reversing the ball around the perimeter of the defense, moving it around to get a good shot, either inside or from outside the lane.

He felt they forced passes and shots that weren't there against Cozad and McCook. "We have to become more patient and play a lot smarter," he added.

Zuege's confident the offense will come. He said his shooters are just starting to get going and expects more offense production as a result.

Next foes Sidney, Ogallala

Zuege said the Longhorns will have their hands full when they play host to Sidney Friday.

He said they like to play an up-tempo game and will play man defense the whole game.

In addition, they like to put up the trey balls and have picked up some size inside to rebound.

On Saturday, the Longhorns travel to Ogallala. Zuege said that's always a tough place to play. Even though Ogallala went 0-2 last weekend as well, his team will have to be prepared.

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