

Sweden 38 Denmark 12

Swedish Mash Tastes Bitter

Disappointment reigned in Lund, as Denmark lost for the first time to Sweden. This meant Sweden claimed their first Nordic Cup final and Denmark will have to be victorious against Norway on the 17th August to claim second place.



After upsetting tournament favourites and holders, Norway, two weeks earlier, there was great anticipation about the second game in the Nordic Cup. That game marked Sweden's first international victory and a sign that the game had made stark progress since their 122-4 defeat to Denmark last year.

The Danish squad included a large number of Copenhagen RLFC players, with a number from Jutland RLFC and Martin Scott-Petersen flying over from Gateshead Storm in England.

The Swedish team was overwhelmingly based around the Pan-Scandinavian League Champions Skåne Crusaders. That cohesiveness was evident very early, as hesitant play from a Danish team still gelling was pounced on by a heavy weight Swedish pack.

When Denmark did seem to score, through a flowing dynamic move straight from the training pitch, a forward pass was spotted by the observant touch judge and the try disallowed. The first half ended 24-0 and it seemed the contest might be over.

It is therefore a tribute to the Danish team that they were able to fight back. Talismanic Denmark and Copenhagen captain, Eugene Hanrahan, was typically the try scorer, having put in an indefatigable performance. The first four points were turned to six by the conversion kicked by Mark Bailey.

The introduction of youth, with Thor Thomsen, Anton Sass and Jesper Ika also seemed to energise the Danish Lions, and offers great promise for the development of the game, along with promising backs Nikolaj Nohr and Andrei Ungureanu.

Sweden returned to the attack and struck back with two more tries, despite tough tackling from Andrei Ungureanu and the increasingly assured forward Mikkel Wedervang.

However, the Man of the Match performance from the Danes was from Brian Brost, who was masterful at hooker and central to much of the Danish endeavour and verve. It was his timing and flair that created a move for Mark Bailey to touch down in the 69th minute, a try he converted to bring the Danish total to twelve points.