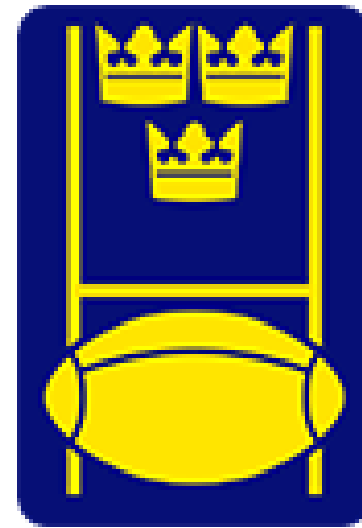


Sweden Herr XV

Alex Laybourne
February 2025



Who am I?

- Men's XVs Head Coach
- 18 Years Head Coach Experience
 - RFU Level 3, MSc (Masters Degree) Performance Coaching
 - Scotland Women's U20s
 - English Independent Schools National XV (Lambs) (U18s, U16s, Men's Vlls)
 - Loughborough – Men's and Women's
 - Cambridge Women's Varsity
 - Leicester Tigers and Northampton Saints PDP (Junior Academy U13-U16)
 - School, Club, County
- Charity CEO, Athlete Performance Lifestyle Mentor and Husband/Dad outside of rugby



The journey so far

- Where we started (January 2020 / October 2021):
 - 54th in World Rugby Rankings
 - 45.04 World Ranking points
 - RE Conference 1 North
- Where we are now (January 2025):
 - 30th in World Rugby Rankings (Sweden's highest ever ranking)
 - 54.10 World Ranking points (highest ever, surpassing 52.56 previously (2013))
 - RE Trophy (currently placed 1st)



What happened in between

- Year 1: RE Conference 1 North Grand Slam and promotion
- Year 2: RE Trophy, 3rd place in first year
- Year 3: RE Trophy, 2nd place (and 2nd overall on 2-year cycle) with a highest ever 'European' finish
- 13/3 Test Match Win/Loss ratio (81%)
 - Reversed a 0-12 result to Luxembourg to 51-5 the other side of 'Covid'
 - First win over Lithuania in over 15 years
 - First ever win over Ukraine
 - Clear development & learning after each of the 3 losses





The Foundations

- Gå På
- Great people
- Strong Connection
- Clear, ambitious vision and direction internally
- The environment – Hard Work / Enjoyment

Our environment

- Coach led, Player driven
- Detail orientated
- Standards not rules
- A focus on effort / Carolean efforts
- Open, honest and challenge based
- Hard work / enjoyment
- Bli bättre
- Aims to build depth chart – iron sharpens iron
- Celebrate success



Planning a season

- The full 12 month's (August – April) and 2 cycles (Autumn and Spring) need to all be interconnected, away from, and in camp
- Lots of people involved, and many moving parts
- What does a cycle look like and how do we plan it? (including considerations, time of year, available dates etc)
- Preparing for performance
- Selection
- Match day routines and optimising performance
- Review – camp, games, cycle



What does a cycle look like and how do we plan it?



- Autumn and Spring bring different challenges (and opportunities), both at camp, and in the build up to them / between them
- Try to look at the full 12 months and understand wider player commitments, share dates as early as possible to help bookings (e.g. reduce costs for players), and allow them to plan personal lives
- Camps are important to build connection, develop players and embed our game model. They are also a key cog in selection. They are designed to prepare for performance
- Online calls build rugby IQ, embed game model and build connection points
- Autumn:
 - Domestic season (Sweden and overseas), so players are 'match fit'
 - Planning around available dates (taking in to account personal lives, holiday, travel)
 - Alignment camps and looking at a wider pool, and then build detail closer to test matches
- Spring:
 - Balance with 7s and working closely with Richard VB (and making the most of the opportunity for both teams)
 - Domestic players haven't played for 3 months
 - Focus on a smaller core of players to get them up to speed as quickly as possible

Preparing for performance

- Review of previous cycle and needs
- Opposition analysis (part of camp design)
- Cycle and Camp design together, plus building blocks away from camp (e.g. S&C)
- Additional resource (what can we add, e.g. Sports Psych, Paul Wallace, Referee reviews)
- ‘Teams’ calls
- Player management (Physio, player availability)





Selection

- Identifying and monitoring players:
 - Domestic (and overseas) season footage / eyes on the ground
 - P18s and 7s coaches and video sources
 - Information from club coaches
 - Research (non-Sweden based)
 - Prior knowledge of players
- Selection for camps:
 - Current form
 - 'Top end' / test match level ability
 - Future potential (with current ability)
 - Rankings based
- The final 23:
 - Understanding and execution of SWE XV game model
 - Tactical considerations, needs for the team and balance (e.g. jumpers, 6/2 or 5/3, style of game)
 - Current form
 - 'Top end' / test match level ability
 - Performances at camp



Match day routines and optimising performance

- Make it special, don't just go through the motions
 - E.g. Shirt presentation, changing room, milestones
- Clarity – Players and Management
- Routines – only need to consider performance
- Only talk about winning



Review process

- Important to review and refine regularly: camps, games, cycle – include on and off field elements
- What can move the needle to help us win Test Matches
- Involve everyone:
 - Management Team reviews
 - Leadership Group reviews
 - Anonymous reviews
 - 1 to 1s
 - External viewpoints





What is next and where are we going?

-
- Most important game is always our next one – Luxembourg (29th March)
 - Then Poland (12th April) in a double header at Trelleborg alongside the women's game vs Portugal
 - Sweden vs Guernsey/Jersey Select (15th May)
 - Some cool individual milestones:
 - Tim – 49 Test Match caps, Luxembourg would be 50
 - Axel – 18 Test Match tries, just 3 away from equalling Ian Gowland's 21 Test Match record
 - Theo – 28 consecutive games, Poland would be 30
 - Ale – Professional contract 7 years after starting rugby, and less than 3 years after moving him to prop

Final thoughts



CELEBRATE SUCCESS



BLI BATTRE AT EVERY
OPPORTUNITY



ENJOY THE JOURNEY
AND EACH MOMENT



Any questions?

A.Laybourne@hotmail.co.uk

WhatsApp: (+44) 07746 792378

