

Event: 2018 Sweden All Star Game
Hosted by: Leksand Lumberjacks and Rättvik Butchers
Co-Founders: Ketch Marsh and Evan Opperman

Write Up:

Try this:

Ketch Marsh and I were having a few beers after a brutal loss to the reigning Swedish Elite Series champion, Sölvesborg Firehawks. Our loss stung hard, because our team, the Rättvik Butchers, had been the team the Firehawks beat for the championship. Losing to them again right away had been a bad way to start the summer.

We began to try to get our minds off the game by focusing on the big picture of baseball overseas: Sweden needed more local players, and it also needed better connections between the far-flung teams. How could we promote not just the Rättvik Butchers but all of Swedish Baseball?

Our first ideas were good but lacked the impact we wanted: How about a 4th of July Butchers barbecue? Raising money with merchandise for sale or corporate sponsorships? Finally, the brainstorming and a few Dala Bryggeri lagers led to our ‘a-ha!’ moment. We would create an All Star Event pitting the imports (“World” team) vs. the Swedish All-Stars. With an influx of summer tourists in the Dalarna region in late July, this would be the perfect spot to promote the best baseball Scandinavia had to offer to the maximum number of people. National team coach Jim Sasko, who we met at Stockholm’s field before our game, liked that idea and said he would try to get the Swedish Baseball Federation on board.

This is where persistence became vital. A few coaches in the league had reservations, but we got support right away from Tony Klarberg, Camran Hanson, and Andy Berglund. Still, we needed all of the clubs participating. Eventually, we made ourselves enough of a nuisance that everyone agreed. Since Leksand has a long history with baseball and since its field was in a better, more central location for the event, we thought it would be better to have the event there, instead of Rättvik. We met with Leksands club president, Tony Klarberg, and other city council leaders, and presented our idea and plans. They agreed to assist in our efforts, arranging field usage and working with us and the Federation to add a kids camp and Celebrity and Legends Softball Game to the weekend agenda.

For the All Star weekend, our greatest hope was to use this event to promote baseball to a younger generation in the same way we were both inspired by watching the MLB and Cape Cod Baseball League’s Midsummer Classics in our own childhoods. Pulling off an event of that scale and quality was a massive undertaking, though. The project took weeks to plan and promote. We designed a custom logo (shown below), and partnered with local businesses to sponsor T-shirts for the event. These were worn by the All-Stars and sold to fans in order to raise money for the Svenska Cancerförbundet (Swedish Cancer Foundation). We promoted our event in our small town, used social media outlets to raise awareness within the tourism circles, and took out a huge front-page advertisement in a local newspaper.

In all those efforts, we were inspired by how eagerly the locals bought into our idea. People were calling us offering to set up online video or interview services for free. Locals offered their couches and extra bedrooms for players to stay in for the weekend. This event singlehandedly brought not only the Dalarna community together, but the teamwork aspects of planning it helped foster new friendships within the

league as a whole.

When the event date came, Ketch and I had no idea what would happen. We had more than a little concern that nobody in this hockey-crazed country would show up. Yet as they often do, the Swedes vastly exceeded our expectations. The kids' clinic drew 150% of our expected attendance, with about 50 youngsters. Many attendees had never played baseball before, and some ended up joining their local 12U program after the clinic. Rättvik alone had 3 new youth players start baseball this summer.

Our Celebrity Softball Game was one of the most entertaining parts of the day. We had former players, Olympians, local government leaders, and notable local businesspeople swinging for the fences as our on-field interviewer roamed the field during the game asking questions from the audience.

By the time the actual All Star Game time came around there were more than 500 people in attendance. We had another 500 reported watching the online stream from all over the world. To put this in perspective, only about 250 people show up for the league championship series. This was surely one of the most significant events in Swedish baseball history. On top of exposing our league and sport across Sweden, this event helped foster new relationships between players and fans! Some players met other imports that helped them find winter leagues to play in. Others made new friends to meet up with on road series throughout the season. And, lifelong friends were made on one of the most fun days we had every spent on a ball field .

The World team ended up winning 5-4, but nobody really paid much attention to this on-field result. With such great inter-league camaraderie and youth development, the Federation announced that it plans to keep this All Star Game running for the foreseeable future. Ultimately this was one of the best baseball days I've ever experienced, and it stands out as a highlight of my time abroad.

Ketch and I hope that our story helps encourage other European leagues to follow and improve our All Star Game model. With a few beers for inspiration, who knows what's possible for baseball overseas?

Evan Opperman
Rättvik Butchers Baseball Club, Sweden

Local News Story:

<https://www.siljannews.se/sport/vi-vill-attrahera-en-bredare-publik/>

Award from Swedish Baseball Federation for our efforts:



SBSF Månadens Utvecklingscoach - Juli **Ketchum Marsh and Evan Opperman** **Rättvik Butchers**

I Dalarna arrangerades den 21 juli en väldigt lyckad All-Starmatch för välgörenhet. Arrangemanget leddes framförallt av Ketchum och Evan som blåste liv i idén om en All-Starmatch som hade diskuterats. De tog tag i arbetet, startade och ledde sedan samarbetet mellan Rättvik Butchers och Leksand Lumberjacks i att arrangera vad som kom att bli en magisk dag. Eventet bestod av ett ungdomsläger och en kändismatch för att sedan avslutas med "Sverige mot Världen." Genom ett gediget arbete och samarbete med framförallt Tony Klarberg och Annakarin Solén Westling som var huvudansvarig för Leksand lyckades de skapa en fest som drog uppemot 500 åskådare. Ketchum och Evan har även varit väldigt aktiva inom ungdomsutvecklingen i Rättvik hela säsongen genom bl.a. ungdomsläger och prova på i skolor.



Logo:



T-Shirts presented by XL Bygg and Team Sportia:



Photo of both teams:



Our Game Plan Document:

Swedish All Star Day 2018

Date: JULY 21 2018

Youth Clinic (10:00) Earlier? 2 or 3 hours? Include softball?

- Warm up
- Catch/throw
- Hitting
- Games
- Wiffle Ball?
- Food
- Autograph session
- Shirts, hats

Home Run Derby (13:00)

Swedes vs Imports or 2 hitters from every club (north vs south, east vs west)

Timed or 10 outs, 7 outs, 7 outs?

-Timed seems to be working very well for mlb. We should consider using metal bats or moving the cage upwards a bit to make for more homeruns

Have youth kids catch fly balls in the outfield

All-Star Game

15:00 Batting Practice (3/4 rounds of 5 swings per player)

16:00 Pregame/infield/outfield

-Player introductions

-local sing swedish national anthem

16:30 First Pitch

19:00(approx.) End of game, all-star game MVP/CY Young ceremonies

Uniforms

- Swedes wear national team jerseys, imports wear respective club jerseys, or vice versa and have import jerseys made up? (more costly)
- White or grey pants?
- All-star/event hats/shirts?
- Event hats should be made, shirts are bonus

Coaches

- Swedish team potential coaches: Magnus Höglund, Håkan Börjes, Tony Klarberg, Rick Reimer, Björn Johannessen, Jim Sasko, Petter Croneld, Johan Eriksson, Peter Schöön
- Import team potential coaches: Andy Berglund, Jim Sasko, Rick Reimer, Ketchum Marsh, Trevor Rooper

Pitching Plan:

- Each pitcher throws 1 inning or 25-35 pitches.
- Each Club should provide (at least) 2 Swedish pitchers and 1 imported pitcher
- It is the coaches decision to decide the order in which the pitchers from each club will throw
- There MUST be at least ONE pitcher warming up in the bullpen at all times.
- Each pitcher will throw NO MORE than 30(?) pitches

Lineups:

- 9 starters and 9 reserves
- Starters should be voted on by position by league coaches, or the players, fans, etc could vote via facebook poll or other social media platform
- Reserves should enter the game after 5th inning (unless injury/ejection/poor performance or misconduct occur)

Imports:

- Evan Opperman
- John Collins
- Will Nahmens
- Tyler Overstreet
- Ketchum Marsh
- Hector Acuña
- Eddie Aucoin
- Mateusz Szustek
- Szon Tomkiewicz
- Tymoteusz Tomkiewicz
- Kestias Villemas
- Enrice Morton
- Jacob McClure
- Chris Childress*
- Stephen Lucas*
- Nathan Skinner*
- Kieran Moore*
- Pieter Kemp*
- Simon Ruan

- Samuel Siddall
- *requires housing

What needs to be sponsored?

- Event shirts/caps- have one sponsor of each, and have their logo/name on back with all the clubs names on the back in a circle or other design
- Baseballs and Umpires
- Food
- Drinks
- snacks/ice cream
- Accomodation (aside from host families) - around 20 total beds
- Transportation?

Possible Sponsors:

- Rättviks/Leksands Kommun
- Leksand Strand
- Leksand IF
- Hostel/Hotels
- Rättviks Glass

Celebrity and Legends Softball Game ?,

-Perhaps we could do this from 11-13 while the kids camp is going on.

- Club Presidents
- The Hives
- Leksand/Rättvik mayors
- Henrik
- Butcher/Lumberjack legends
- Johanessen brothers
- Federation members?

-Recommended 100kr donation to attend/play in the event. All proceeds for the event go to charity

-which charity?

-3 innings slow pitch softball on Leksand's softball field

Meeting with Mats - 18/6/18

What can we use?

Field? Softball field?

Turf? Grassy area behind the field?

Cage? Locker room? Indoor cage?

Price?

Tasks:

Finding accomodation for 20(?) max players:

Host families (Rättvik/Leksand)

This would include current players homes, parents homes, coaches, board, fans, anyone willing

Hostel(s)... such as Daniel-- airbnb host

Airbnb

Feeding _____ all star players:

Restaurants willing to feed all stars?

Hemköp?

Let them pay for themselves?

Keys to field:

Lockers:

Speaker:

Umpires:

Field crew:

Kiosk:

What else do we NEED from Leksand?

Grounds crew

Locker Rooms

Profits from Kiosk (extra day of profit)

Legal rights of any food trucks (ie can we ask Big Street to have a tent there)

Accomodations

Youth Clinic - Leksands Kommun/Rättviks

WORD has to get out

WHICH Charity for Softball game (ie refugees)

Order of Importance

All Star Game

Housing/accomodation

Transportation -> club pays or player pays?

Youth Clinic - include softball?

Celebrity Softball game

Home run Derby