



EUROPEAN FOOTBALL POOL

We Share the Passion for the Game!



Interview with Mats Gren, Assistant Head Coach, Grasshopper Club Zürich

First of all, congratulations for qualifying for the UEFA Intertoto Cup 2008 after a strong finish in the 2007/08 Swiss Super League season.

EFP

Are you aware that the UEFA Intertoto-Cup started as a summer tournament for pools companies in 1961 and has been sponsored ever since by those regulated European Sports Betting Companies?

M. Gren

No, I didn't know that the tournament goes back that far. During my active career I used to play many Intertoto Cup matches and the tournament was from my point of view always good and interesting and one could gather valuable international experiences.

EFP

Grasshopper Club Zurich with its famous appearances in the Champions League intended to get into the UEFA Cup directly. Do you think the UEFA Intertoto Cup is therefore rather a punishment?

M. Gren

It's normal to aim high; but last year our goals were modest. We wanted to finish among the top 5 last season and after a bad first half of the season we were very happy to end on 4th place, which gives us now the opportunity to qualify for the UEFA Cup through the UEFA Intertoto Cup. Therefore, the Intertoto Cup is not all secondarily in our planning.

EFF

What effect will this participation have on your performance in the Swiss Super League which will start soon?

M. Gren

Definitely positive. When the Swiss League starts, we will have played three competition matches already and that is an advantage for us.

EFF

How would you rate your prospects for this years UEFA Intertoto Cup tournament?

M. Gren

We hope that we can overcome the two rounds of the Intertoto Cup, so that we can play the UEFA Cup qualification. Our chances are good, but also in the Intertoto Cup there are very tough and challenging opponents.

EFF

What experiences do you connect with the UEFA Intertoto Cup and what kind of memories do you have?

M. Gren

During my active player career, I collected lots of positive memories. For instance, I remember one time as I was playing for Grasshoppers that we chartered a small plane and flew to Poland to play a match. After that we flew directly to Sweden, my home country, and had a training camp there, played a second match and returned back to Switzerland. This trip was for me the first time I had played against fellow countrymen and a Swedish team since I moved to Switzerland, and therefore very special and emotional.

EFF

How do you evaluate the end of the UEFA Intertoto Cup? (Editor: UEFA decided that in 2008 the last edition of the UEFA Intertoto Cup will be held and it will be replaced in 2009 by a longer UEFA Cup qualification phase).

M. Gren

I don't know the motives for the end of the Intertoto Cup. But what I can say is that it was always a very good possibility to collect international experiences, especially for smaller clubs, and to qualify for the UEFA Cup.

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