



EHF CUP



CUP WINNERS'
CUP



CHALLENGE
CUP

2007/2008 Men's EHF European Club Season sets new precedents

The 2007/2008 Men's EHF European club season has come to an end, underlining the ever increasing interest in men's club handball throughout Europe. The season saw a record number of clubs taking part in the EHF club competitions, which comprise of the EHF Champions League, EHF Cup, Cup Winners' Cup and Challenge Cup. A total of 162 clubs from 42 EHF Member Federations and the associated member Kosovo registered teams for the competitions, as can be seen below.

The 2007/2008 Season

EHF Champions League:	40 clubs from 29 nations
EHF Cup:	48 clubs from 37 nations
Challenge Cup:	38 clubs from 25 nations
Cup Winners' Cup:	36 clubs from 35 nations

All in all 442 matches were played in the four competitions and they attracted a total of 866.200 spectators, which was an increase of almost 100.000 in comparison to the 776.7000 spectators of last season. The number of goals increased too with a staggering 25.750 goals being scored –increasing from 24.014!

The Champions

The roll of honour shows just how wide-spread and strong top level handball is in many parts of Europe: teams from Spain, Germany, Hungary and Romania took a title in final matches which were close right up to the final whistle. The winners of the EHF Champions League, EHF Cup and Cup Winners' Cup all won the title away from home, proving to be the more convincing team on the day. It was just UCM Resita of Romania who lifted the trophy in front of a home crowd, defending the title to win for a second consecutive year. All final matches were broadcast live on television.

EHF Champions League

In the EHF Champions League, BM Ciudad Real (ESP) were crowned Champions for a second time, coming through against defending Champions THW (GER) to make up Kiel's two goal advantage from the first leg. They last won the title in 2005/2006.

Both in the Pabellon Quijote Arena in Ciudad Real and the Sparkassen-Arena in Kiel were sold out within a matter of days and the tension and excitement in both towns

was immense in the days approaching the finals. A total of 16 800 fans managed to get a ticket for the finals. Public Viewing zones allowed additional fans to follow the matches on large screens. Media interest in the finals set new heights in men's handball. Over 150 accredited media representatives were in Germany to see the Champion take the title. Although figures are still trickling in concerning the number of viewers, first statistics show that there was an increase in viewers across the board.

EHF Cup

Both teams in the EHF Cup experienced their first European Cup final. HSG Nordhorn (GER) took the title, despite losing in the 2nd leg in Copenhagen, after a strong first leg at home where they won by 4 goals. Over 4 000 spectators filled the hall in the small town of Nordhorn. Due to the limited size of the hall in Copenhagen only around 1 000 fans could watch the 2nd leg, despite the fact that demand for tickets was immense. Many had to be content with watching the match live on television which was shown in both Germany and Denmark.

Cup Winners' Cup

An all time record was set in the Cup Winners' Cup Final (2nd leg), a total of 13 500 handball fans were in the SAP Arena in Mannheim to watch the first European Cup final ever for Rhein-Neckar Löwen (GER). The tickets were sold out within three days. MKB Veszprem took the title making it third time lucky – this was their third Cup Winners' Cup Final!

Challenge Cup

UCM Resita (ROU) successfully defended their title in the Challenge Cup. They beat Alpla Hard of Austria convincingly in the final. Last season was Resita's first season where they also took the title. Again both matches were shown live on TV.

Conclusion

The 2007/2008 has now ended with final round-up work coming to a close. Tor Lian, EHF President, voices his satisfaction, *"This season has proved that handball is prospering throughout Europe. The sheer fact that clubs from four countries are represented on the winners' board shows the quality of the competitions. Media interest around Europe is at a record high, demand was huge for tickets and the TV audience is thriving."*

Thoughts are already on the 2008/2009 season with national federations announcing their national league results, which can be viewed on www.eurohandball.com. Deadline for all club registrations for participation in the 2008/2009 season is 22 June 2008 and the 2008/2008 competition line-ups will be published by 22nd July 2008. The EHF will publish news on the new season throughout the summer.