

## Mikael Ljungberg

\* 13 June 1970 - † 18 November 2004

It came as a terrible shock to Swedish sports fans to learn that former World and Olympic Wrestling Champion Mikael LJUNGBERG had taken his own life on November 18th 2004. He was only 34.

He'd been in hospital and was suffering from depression after a year when both his parents had died and his marriage had broken up and he'd been forced to sell his house. Even so it seems incredible that such strong person could succumb the way he did.

LJUNGBERG, who was born on June 13th 1970 had twice won World and European titles and took the bronze medal in Atlanta before going on to triumph in Sydney in the 96 kg class in Greco-Roman in Sydney. A shoulder injury brought his competitive career to a close in 2000 after he'd become Sweden's first wrestling champion medallist in 48 years. Strange there should be

such an interval as after the war Sweden dominated all the Games during the era of the famous coach Robert OKSA and Einar RABERG, the president of the IF. LJUNGBERG had been elected sportsman of the year (*Svenska Dagbladets goldmedal*) and last year he received the special award handed out on the birthday of Crown Princess VICTORIA. He was a very popular speaker at conventions and conferences and was the spokesman of the Swedish athletes in the NOC. He was to be elected chairman of the "Olympic Gold Club", the organization for all Swedes winning gold.

He had also been due to take up an appointment as head of Swedish Wrestling from the new year but this was a controversial appointment and had not received universal approval.

*Wolf Lyberg*