

Citywire

Stefan Edberg: why I swapped tennis for fund management

by **Philip Haddon** on Mar 03, 2011 at 10:32



19 years ago Stefan Edberg beat Pete Sampras in the US Open to win the sixth and final Grand Slam tennis title of his career - but now, he tells Citywire, he is looking to beat the fund management competition with his firm Case Asset Management.

He set up Stockholm-based Case along with former **Catella** hedge fund managers Bo Pettersson and Fredrik Svensson in 2004, having developed a taste for financial markets when he ended his tennis career with total winnings of more than \$20 million.

'I had no interest in investing at the beginning of my career, but after I started being successful I wanted to take control of my own money and life: that's how I got involved and interested,' Edberg, who is now based just outside the city of Växjö, said.

'I had people investing my money for me at first. Then, when I had more time, I started following the markets and trying to understand what was going on. Fifteen years later I think I am getting the idea.'

Edberg says he does not play much tennis anymore and now spends the majority of his time focusing on financial markets and on the management of Case, which now has assets under management of around SEK 4.5 billion (" 500 million). He speaks almost every day with the manager of the firm's flagship Fair Play fund, Tom Andersson, and regularly attends board meetings in Stockholm where they discuss investment strategy.

Edberg was known in tennis for his attacking serve-and-volley style, but says his approach to investing is rather different. 'I was very aggressive on the tennis court, I had a very offensive way of playing, but I am the total opposite at investing. I am very conservative, focusing on looking after my wealth. I think the conservative approach will pay off in the long run, and being diversified when things get tough is key.'

In fund management Edberg admires Swedish hedge fund **Brummer & Partners**, while in tennis he is a big admirer of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. 'They are great for tennis; great ambassadors playing at an extraordinary level,' he said. 'It is a rivalry you don't see often anymore, it's fantastic. They have had the best matches since McEnroe and Borg.'

However, he thinks awareness among top tennis players about what to do with their wealth is absent and he hopes he can help. 'The knowledge isn't there, but the key is to find the right people or you might end up in trouble.'

He already has some sports people as clients of Case, but is looking to get more from that segment in the future. 'We are looking into that sort of business; maybe we could steer them away from trouble,' Edberg said.

His firm has just **launched a new fund called Safe Play** which will focus on Nordic corporate bonds, an area the firm's flagship fund became heavily involved with as it sought refuge from tumbling markets during the financial crisis.

'We still see a lot of opportunities in corporate bonds and CoCo (contingent convertible) bonds. It will be a growing market in Sweden, which is lagging the rest of Europe. Safe Play will target returns of 5-7% per year and could be a good fund for private investors and institutions, it is a very low risk trade. For me it is the perfect asset, I have been riding the storm with them.'

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Stevie Boy

Mar 03, 2011 at 10:53

Espen Baardsen and now Edberg. What is it with Scandinavian professional athletes moving into the fund management arena after retirement? Talented bunch.

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Gregory Steiner

Mar 03, 2011 at 11:19

I am waiting to see Michael Chang managing a Chinese Equity Fund...after battling on the tennis court they would compete relative to their Citywire rating !

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P Everton

Mar 03, 2011 at 15:12

Bjorg - that'll be the tuneless, Icelandic chanteuse, right?

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Anonymous 1 needed this 'off the record'

Mar 03, 2011 at 16:10

That would be the Michael Chang born in New Jersey and who represented the USA then. Perhaps he would be managing a US Equity Fund?

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