

Spain hails Messi 'the greatest'

Football

AFP, Madrid

Spain bathed in glory on Tuesday after Barcelona star Lionel Messi won the Ballon d'Or for best footballer of the year for a record fourth time, cementing his claim to be one of the greatest players of all time.

Spain coach Vicente del Bosque also snatched top honours, in recognition of their Euro 2012 triumph, which followed its 2010 World Cup win and Euro 2008 crown, to top a virtual clean sweep for Spanish and La Liga players at the prestigious awards.

But it was the smiling 25-year-old Argentine international who stole the show, with pictures of him picking up the FIFA prize in Zurich dressed in an eye brow-raising black and white-spotted suit and bow tie, splashed across front pages.

"Spain!!!" headlined Madrid-based Marca, Spain's biggest-selling sports daily and a favourite of Real Madrid fans.

"Unique, unmatchable Messi," the paper said after the striker scored a stunning 91 goals in 2012 in all competitions, smashing the 40-year-old record of



2013
MESSI
WHAT SUIT
WILL HE WEAR

AWARDS LIST

Ballon d'Or:

1. Lionel Messi (ARG)
2. Cristiano Ronaldo (POR)
3. Andrés Iniesta (ESP)

Coach:

1. Vicente Del Bosque (ESP)
2. Jose Mourinho (POR)
3. Pep Guardiola (ESP)

Team

Iker Casillas (ESP) - Dani Alves (BRA), Gerard Pique (ESP), Sergio Ramos (ESP), Marcelo (BRA) - Xabi Alonso (ESP), Xavi Hernandez (ESP), Andres Iniesta (ESP) - Lionel Messi (ARG), Radamel Falcao (COL), Cristiano Ronaldo (POR)

Best goal:

1. Miroslav Stoch (SVK)
2. Falcao (COL)
3. Neymar (BRA)

Fairplay: Uzbekistan Football Federation (UFF)

FIFA president award: Franz Beckenbauer (GER)

Woman player

1. Abby Wambach (USA)
2. Marta (BRA)

German legend Gerd Mueller of 85.

"Leo Messi was crowned yesterday as the best player in history," Marca said. "No-one until now had won four Ballons d'Or in a row. Leo has done it, and consecutively."

Rival sports daily AS, too, lavished praise on Messi.

"Since we have known him, every year he plays better, every year he scores more goals," said the paper's columnist Alfredo Relano.

"Golden Messi," headlined the Barcelona-based Mundo Deportivo, adding: "Leo Messi is the greatest. Huge. Unique."

On his return to Barcelona airport, Messi told reporters that he had forgotten many people in his speech but had wanted to mention Barca coach Tito Vilanova, who is being treated for a cancer of the salivary gland, and defender Eric Abidal.

The French defender is training with the squad again after a liver transplant.

"When things calmed down I remembered Tito and Abidal and everyone, obviously," Messi said, apologising for his omission.

Messi was one of three players in the Spanish league on the shortlist for the world's best footballer award. The two

others were his Barca teammate Andres Iniesta and rival striker Cristiano Ronaldo of Real Madrid.

In addition, all of the top six names in the final ranking that Messi topped were from La Liga teams.

In the FIFPro selection for the best 11-man line-up, meanwhile, six were Spaniards and all but two were from the Spanish league.

That selection included Ronaldo and three other Real players -- Iker Casillas, Sergio Ramos and Xabi Alonso -- plus Iniesta, Messi and two other Barcelona players, Gerard Pique and Xavi Hernandez.

Iniesta backs Messi for more

AFP, Zurich

Spain's Andres Iniesta shrugged off the disappointment of failing to dislodge favourite Lionel Messi as the Argentinian won a record fourth Ballon d'Or at a FIFA gala here on Monday by predicting his Barcelona teammate would be back for more next year.

Messi easily saw off Real Madrid rival Cristiano Ronaldo and Iniesta for the prize - and Iniesta said he would surely win again.

"Leo, if he continues in this vein, won't let a fifth straight Ballon d'Or title slip. I congratulate him on a fourth which makes him unique."

"It's not a question of sharing it out with others just because somebody has won a lot - you have to savour a job well done and that's what we are doing today (Monday)," said Iniesta after the award in Zurich.

Iniesta, 28, joined Messi in saying such awards are essentially a reflection of the team in which the winner plays and "the fact that we (Barcelona) have so many representatives in the team (of the year) means we have fulfilled our mission."

Barcelona had five players in the team of 2012 - as did Real Madrid, with Atletico Madrid's Radamel Falcao making up the numbers.

Five-star Everton

AFP, Cheltenham



Everton swept into the FA Cup fourth round with a 5-1 rout of League Two minnows Cheltenham on Monday.

Although Everton are flying high in the Premier League and harbour genuine ambitions of qualifying for the Champions League, Toffees boss David Moyes refused to rest his key players and sent out a strong side at Whaddon Road to guard against a potential third round giant-killing.

And his senior stars proved too hot for fourth-tier Cheltenham to handle as Nikica Jelavic's early goal and a Leighton Baines penalty put the result beyond doubt within 21 minutes.

Leon Osman added Everton's third goal soon after half-time and although Russell Penn got one back

for Cheltenham there was never any chance of a comeback.

Seamus Coleman and Marouane Fellaini rounded off the scoring to ensure Everton, beaten by Liverpool in the semifinals last season, earned a last 32 clash with Bolton or Sunderland later this month.

With 67 places between the clubs in the English league system it was hardly surprising to see Everton, featuring eight of the team that won 2-1 at Newcastle last weekend, take charge right from the kick-off.

The Toffees opened the scoring after 12 minutes when Fellaini's curling shot from the right crashed against the far post and Croatia forward Jelavic alertly slotted home the rebound for his seventh goal of the campaign.

Everton were cutting through the home defence with ease and Jelavic shot wide after more good play by Fellaini before Brown produced a superb save to keep out Baines' curling free-kick.

Baines wasn't to be denied and the England left-back doubled Everton's lead from the penalty spot in the 21st minute.

Cheltenham captain Alan Bennett was harshly ruled to have fouled Fellaini and the resulting spot-kick from Baines contained too much power for Brown.

Moyes' men killed off the tie after 49 minutes when Osman slotted the ball past Brown after taking a Baines pass in stride.

Cheltenham's training ground was broken into last week, but there was no chance they would rob Everton of victory even after they pulled one back two minutes later through Penn's powerful finish.

Coleman re-established Everton's three goal lead in the 58th minute with a clever flick over Brown after exchanging passes with Victor Anichebe.

Belgian midfielder Fellaini rubbed salt into Cheltenham's wounds in the 89th minute with a close-range finish from Anichebe's cross.

Pep eyeing return

Football

AFP, Zurich

Former Barcelona coach Josep Guardiola, currently on a one-year sabbatical, said Monday he was already thinking about a return to coaching but stressed he didn't know at which club.

"I want to coach," said Guardiola, who left the Nou Camp last summer. "I'm young, I'm only 41 years old. Now I have another type of life, a type of life that I wanted to have at this moment, that's it."

"I don't have a team to go to, but yes, I'd like to return to coaching."

"I have taken a decision to return to coaching but beyond that no decision has been taken."

Guardiola's name has been linked with jobs at a raft of top-flight clubs and countries after his decision to step down as coach of Barcelona after four years in charge in which he delivered 14 trophies, including two Champions League titles.

But he played down any link to either German giants Bayern Munich or Brazil,

hosts of the 2014 World Cup.

"Bayern have a coach by the name of Jupp Heynckes. It would be disrespectful on my part to speak with a club that currently has a coach," he said, then turning to Brazil, where his name was evoked after the departure of Mano Menezes.

"It's an honour that they spoke of me, but Brazil has great coaches. For example, the one they chose, (Luiz Felipe) Scolari."

"I'm grateful to the Brazilian fans," he said, adding that he thought it best if a national team was managed by someone from that country.

"Pep", as he is known, added that he felt pride at watching the team he once coached, now overseen by his long-time assistant Tito Vilanova.

"I love coming to see Barcelona play. To see them play is a great show," said Guardiola.

"I was lucky enough to have been with the team for a few years, and I'm delighted that everything's continuing as normal or even better."

"I feel happy that a club is admired and respected for its game," he said.



Everton striker Nikica Jelavic (C) celebrates his opening goal with teammate Marouane Fellaini during their FA Cup third round match against Cheltenham Town at the Abbey Business Stadium on Monday. PHOTO: AFP

Ronaldo heading to London

Football

AFP, London

Former Brazil footballer Ronaldo is heading to London to continue his commercial links with WPP, one of the world's largest advertising groups, it was confirmed Tuesday.

For the past two years Ronaldo has been running a Brazilian sports marketing agency 9ine, which has worked with WPP and he has also helped the group with their plans for the next football World Cup and Olympic Games, both of which will take place in Brazil in 2014 and 2016 respectively.

When contacted by AFP in London, WPP were guarded about Brazilian press reports that Ronaldo would be 'mentored' by WPP chief executive Martin Sorrell while in Britain.

But in a statement, Sorrell said: "We have a joint venture with Ronaldo - 9ine -- which has already had great success in Brazil with clients Claro (a wireless communications company) and Duracell (batteries)."

"He'll be working with us on that in the UK. We've also been working with him on the World Cup and Olympics."

Ronaldo, 36, scored both goals when Brazil beat Germany 2-0 to win the 2002 World Cup final in Yokohama, Japan and, after spells with Real Madrid, Barcelona and Inter Milan retired from football in 2011.

WPP owns the Young & Rubicam and Ogilvy advertising agencies among others, as well as communications agency RLM Finsbury and market research firm Kantar Worldpanel.

Abby wins FIFA gong

Football

AFP, Zurich

US football veteran Abby Wambach, 32, won FIFA's coveted Women's Player of the Year award for the first time on Monday.

The forward's five goals in the London Olympics helped the United States win gold.

The Americans capped their London campaign with a 2-1 victory over Japan in the final, a win that was particularly meaningful after they lost to Japan in the 2011 Women's World Cup final.

Wambach is the first American to win

the award since Mia Hamm in 2002.

Wambach bested Brazil's Marta and her US teammate Alex Morgan in the voting, which is decided by a poll of captains, national team coaches and international media. Wambach earned 20.67 percent of the votes to 13.50 for Marta and 10.87 for Alex Morgan.

"Most importantly, winning any individual award is a total product of the team that you play for," the striker said. "I've never scored a goal without receiving a pass from my team-mates. Thanks to all the fans out there who continue to inspire me and the rest of the team to win as many games as we can."

ফুটপাত দিয়ে হাঁটুন
রাস্তা পারাপারে ফুট ওজারবিজ বা জেব্রাক্রসিং ব্যবহার করুন
কাঁটাতার পরিষ্কার রাস্তা ক্রস করবেন না

নির্মল বায়ু এবং টেকসই পরিবেশ (CASE) প্রকল্প
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ ও উত্তর সিটি করপোরেশন

What to WATCH

BTV World
Bangladesh Premier League
Team BJMC v Abahani
Live from 4:30pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Cricket League
(Four-day match, Day-2)
Prime Bank South Zone v BCB North Zone
Time: 9:15am
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur
Walton Central Zone v Islami Bank South Zone
Time: 9:15am
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra

Bangladesh Premier League
Team BJMC v Abahani
Time: 4:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National