Messi Celebrates with Barca Mates

A Contract Extension Looms

Lionel Messi has been snapped alongside his Barcelona teammates, with the Spaniards' contract negotiations reportedly confident that the agreement will renew his contract. The 35-year-old has clinched both La Liga and European Cup titles on Monday, and toasted his victory alongside Antoine Griezmann and Marc-Andre ter Stegen on the steps from France.

And Messi is reportedly on the verge of a bumper new deal, as Mundo Deportivo report that Barcelona believe the superstar is open to extending his stay at the Nou Camp. Messi has forged off firm competition from Liverpool starlet Virgil van Dijk to win the award, with Cristiano Ronaldo, who snubbed the ceremony, finishing in third spot.

The superstar pipped the Dutchman to the top spot by just seven votes, and was also supported by his brother’s awarded Antinozio at the star-studded event in Paris.

In the wake of yet another accolade, the Spanish publication highlighted that Messi has the choice to terminate his contract next year as stipulated in his current deal, but holds no desire to leave the club.

President Josep Bartomeu had previously stressed that Messi’s priority is to remain with the top club giants, and the club’s hierarchy are seen to secure the star’s future in Catalonia.

There are concerns, however, that Messi only wants to remain with Barcelona for as long as he is able to compete at the highest level, and the Aguinaldo is believed to not be focused on battling for his place at the top of the game. The same outlet also understands that the memorials forward wishes to avoid the same fate as his former Barcelona teammate, who had endured a sharp decline in the latter stages of his career at the club.

Bartomeu has reportedly taken charge of negotiations surrounding Messi’s potential renewal and is the main point of contact for the player’s agent.

Anthony Joshua Looks

Beyond Ruiz Rematch

Anthony Joshua issued another broad hint that he will spare no expense in his next time as a man following his 2nd defeat on Saturday.

Joshua appeared considerably more slender in Saudi Arabia than he was in his first defeat, but he suffered a monumental upset loss against Andy Ruiz Jr. in June.

That first fight developed into a thriller with Ruiz dropping Joshua four times before the seventh-round stoppage and the 1st Boxing champion opponent once — all indications from time suggest Joshua will strike and move in his attempts to regain his IBF, WBA and WBO titles.

It could make for a more open an exciting contest, Joshua said, in their final press conference on Wednesday. He refused to put on a show, I’m just a soldier.

He said: "It is interesting being on this side of the table in my 16th fight I challenged and I challenged for a title against Wladimir Klitschko and I fought with the same opponent — Anthony Joshua. It is another fight for the same thing. He is in shape and I am in shape.

Joshua and Ruiz will meet for the first time on July 20 at the sold-out Wembley Stadium, to determine the winner of their 16th fight.

Joshua was asked if winning would be special but he said he would not because I know I will go away. Where I will go, I think I will stay in control and keep my focus and keep that challenge mindset to be the best.

Joshua is looking forward to the challenge.

He said: "I am in shape and this is a fight that I have been preparing for months. I think this is a fight for the future of the sport.

Speaking at the event, Special Olympics National Director, Naomi Fawcett welcomed athletes and guests to the event, congratulating the athletes on their achievements. She said: "This is an extraordinary moment for Special Olympics in the UK and we are delighted to host this event in London."

She continued: "We are proud to be part of this event as it showcases the incredible talent and dedication of Special Olympics athletes, who have achieved so much over the past 12 months."

Special Olympics Nigeria Concludes

Sports for Hope Initiative

Special Olympics Nigeria has concluded the Sports for Hope Initiative with a grand tourney featuring football and volleyball informative talks, entertaining performances as well as health screening for attendees.

The event, which held last Saturday at the Lagos Mini Stadium in Lagos Island was sponsored by the Embassy of France in Nigeria to foster amongst communities the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwD) in social, psychological, empowerment programmes and promote a positive lifestyle choices with the use of Football and Volleyball as its driving sports tool.

Through this initiative, the organization engaged 224 people with intellectual disabilities, 150 people without intellectual disabilities, with vital information on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), financial management, and health promoting behaviors to enable them to make better life choices.

The official kick-off of the event was done by the Ambassador of France to Nigeria, Amaury Pasquier, signaling the start of the first set of competitions.

A cross-section of participants in action during the 2019 Special Olympics Games in Nigeria.