

## Soccer News Digest

--- ARTICLE 1 CONTENT --- Parshva ShahJose Mourinho cites Scott McTominay and Raphael Varane as proof of his 'history' with young stars as Benfica boss targets January signings to boost Liga Portugal title hopesBenfica head coach Jose Mourinho cited the likes of Scott McTominay and Raphael Varane as proof of his "history" of working with young players and developing them into great sportsmen. The Special One, in a press conference on Friday, claimed that Benfica "will surely add one or two players who can help strengthen the squad", before adding that "if there's someone who likes to promote young players, I'm one of them." -----

--- ARTICLE 2 CONTENT --- Ritabrata BanerjeeMan Utd schoolboys and parents 'bemused' by Sir Jim Ratcliffe outburst blaming academy for 'slipping'Manchester United minority owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe's latest rant against the club's academy has left the Red Devils schoolboys and parents 'bemused'. Ratcliffe has taken a ruthless approach since buying stakes at the Premier League club in 2024. He has let go of hundreds of staff in a major job-cutting drive in a bid to tackle the club's financial condition.

----- --- ARTICLE 3 CONTENT --- Tom BellwoodManchester United boss urged to drop 'liability' defender despite role in stunning victory over Liverpool as Ruben Amorim urged to ring the changes for Brighton clashA selection debate is brewing for Man Utd boss Ruben Amorim ahead of the Brighton match, following a controversial call to drop wing-back Diogo Dalot. Dalot was part of the starting line-up in the recent back-to-back victories, including the impressive 2-1 win against Liverpool. But a United legend has urged the Portuguese boss to make key changes this weekend. -----

--- ARTICLE 4 CONTENT --- Matthew JudgeWatch out, Arsenal! Mikel Arteta's Premier League leaders told they should 'fear' Erling Haaland as Man City title charge gathers momentumArsenal and Mikel Arteta have been told they should 'fear' in-form Manchester City striker Erling Haaland as the Premier League title race hots up. The Norway international has been in remarkable form for club and country in 2025-26, with one Premier League legend declaring he may just be in the midst of one of the greatest individual seasons of all time.

----- --- ARTICLE 5 CONTENT --- Ryan KellyFull list of playable leagues in

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Football Manager 26 If you are wondering which leagues are available to play, we've got you covered. Football Manager 26 will feature women's football for the first time in the history of the video game series, while the usual offering of men's leagues has been expanded too. Fans will be able to take charge of clubs in the Egyptian Premier League, the Lithuanian A Lyga and the UAE Pro League. This brings the total number of playable men's leagues in the game to 58. Furthermore, 11 women's competitions have been added to the game, meaning the database has been boosted considerably. You can see the full list of men's and women's leagues below.

NO WEuropeCountryLeagueAustriaAustrian Premier DivisionAustriaAustrian First DivisionBelarusBelarusian Highest LeagueBelarusBelarusian First LeagueBelgiumJupiler Pro LeagueBelgiumChallenger Pro LeagueBelgiumFirst Amateur DivisionBulgariaBulgarian First LeagueBulgariaBulgarian Second LeagueCroatiaCroatian First LeagueCroatiaCroatian Second LeagueCzech RepublicCzech First DivisonCzech RepublicCzech Second DivisonDenmarkSuperligaDenmarkFirst DivisonDenmarkSecond DivisonDenmarkThird DivisionEnglandPremier LeagueEnglandSky Bet ChampionshipEnglandSky Bet League OneEnglandSky Bet League TwoEnglandNational LeagueEnglandNational League North/SouthFinlandFinnish Premier LeagueFinlandFinnish First DivisionFranceLigue 1FranceMcDonald's Ligue 2FranceBKT French NationalGermanyBundesligaGermany2. LigaGermany3. LigaGibraltarGibraltar Football LeagueHungaryHungarian Division IHungaryHungarian Division IIcelandIcelandic Premier DivisionIcelandIcelandic First DivisionIrelandIrish Premier DivisionIrelandIrish First DivisionIsraellIsraeli Premier LeagueIsraellIsraeli National LeagueItalySerie AltItalySerie BItalySerie CLatviaOptibet VirsligaLithuaniaA LygaNetherlandsEredivisieNetherlandsKeuken Kampioen DivisieNorthern IrelandSports Direct PremiershipNorthern IrelandPlayr-Fit ChampionshipNorthern IrelandPlayr-Fit Intermediate LeagueNorwayNorwegian Premier DivisionNorwayNorwegian Flrst DivisionNorwayNorwegian Second DivisionPolandEkstraklasaPolandPolish First

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First LeagueRomaniaRomanian	Second LeagueRussiaRussian	Premier LeagueRussiaRussian	First
DivisionScotlandWilliam Hill	PremiershipScotlandWilliam Hill	ChampionshipScotlandWilliam Hill	
League OneScotlandWilliam Hill	League TwoSerbiaSerbian	SuperLeagueSerbiaSerbian	First
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PremierWalesJD	Cymru	North/SouthNorth	AmericaCountryLeagueCanadaCanadian
Premier			
LeagueMexicoMexican	First	DivisionMexicoMexican	Expansion
			LeagueSouth
AmericaCountryLeagueArgentinaArgentine	Premier	DivisionArgentinaArgentine	Second
DivisionBrazilBrazilian	National First	DivisionBrazilBrazilian	National Second
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National	Third	DivisionChileChilean	First
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Premier			IndiaIndian
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TwoJapanMeiji	Yasuda	J1	LeagueJapanMeiji
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Premier LeagueSouth KoreaHana	1Q K League 1South KoreaHana	1Q K League 2UAEADNOC	
Pro LeagueAfricaCountryLeagueEgyptEgyptian	Premier LeagueSouth AfricaSouth African	Premier	

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Soccer LeagueSouth AfricaSouth African National First Division ChampionshipWhich Women's Competitions are playable?CountryCompetitionAustraliaA-League WomenContinentalUEFA Women's Champions LeagueDenmarkA-LigaEnglandWomen's Super LeagueEnglandWomen's Super League 2FrancePremiere LigueGermanyGoogle Pixel Frauen-BundesligaitalySerie A FemmenileJapanWE LeagueSpainLiga FSpainPrimera FederacionUSANWSLWalesAdran PremierRead moreFootball Manager 2026: Everything you need to knowFM 26 teaser trailer releasedEA Sports FC 26: complete guide to the new gameLatest gaming newsLatest EA Sports FC news -----

Arsenal's Thomas Partey during the English Premier League soccer match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Arsenal at Molineux stadium in Wolverhampton, England, Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025. (AP Photo/Rui Vieira)Rui VieiraAP PhotoSAMActualizado03/08/2025 -13:38CDTCompartir en FacebookCompartir en TwitterCompartir en TelegramCompartir en WhatsappEnviar por emailSOCCER.Georgina Rodríguez sparks wedding rumors with Cristiano RonaldoSOCCER.The biggest secret of Stamford Bridge: the story behind the ashes buried in the penalty spotThomas Parteyis poised to continue his soccer career in Spain after reportedly agreeing to joinLaLigaclubVillarrealas a free agent.The Ghanaian international, who most recentlyconcluded a five-year spell withArsenal, is close to finalizing his switch, with the only formalities left to complete such as medical exams.Barcelona superstar Lamine Yamal is facing trouble following his memorable 18th birthday celebrationThe move marks a LaLiga return forParteyfollowing his previous spell withAtletico Madrid, but his move back to Spain after a five-year absence arrives amid intense scrutiny, following his arrest and charging for alleged rape offences in London.In early July, the Crown Prosecution Service formally chargedParteywith five counts of rape and one of sexual assault relating to incidents involving three women between 2021 and 2022.Parteyhas denied all charges and maintains his cooperation with authorities throughout the multi-year investigation. He is

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scheduled to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on August 5. Villarreal move carries on despite legal issues. According to The Athletic, Villarreal has struck a preliminary agreement with Partey on a contract extending through 2027. The midfielder completed medical exams and is set to be unveiled soon, subject to his court appearance. The deal comes just days after his Arsenal contract officially expired, amid speculation that offers from Saudi clubs and Turkish sides were also on the table. The signing gives Villarreal a seasoned presence in midfield depth, especially as they return to Champions League competition in the 2025-26 season. Parts of the deal reportedly include an initial one-year commitment with an option to extend, allowing the club flexibility depending on both performance and legal developments. Partey emerged from Atlético to join Arsenal in 2020 for over \$58 million and went on to make 167 appearances for the north London club, delivering consistent defensive solidity and occasional offensive contributions. His time at Arsenal ended when contract talks failed to reach a positive conclusion - despite manager Mikel Arteta expressing confidence in Partey's importance to the squad. Arsenal confirmed they routinely followed proper legal processes during the investigation and later declined further comment amid pending proceedings. While clubs commonly weigh character and legal risks in transfer decisions, Villarreal's pursuit of Partey amid formal charges has ignited debate. Analysts and fans alike are divided: some view the acquisition as a bold footballing calculation, others question its moral balance. Detection officials emphasized legal safeguards in the case, including protection of victims and the downsides of premature public speculation. Partey's legal team asserts his right to clear his name in court, noting he "fully cooperated with the police and CPS throughout their three-year investigation." A risky signing for Villarreal. For Villarreal, the return to LaLiga has a strong footballing case. Partey's experience, versatility, and coaching pedigree potentially strengthen the yellow submarine's spine. From Spain's vantage, the club's recruitment represents a calculated risk, justified by his high-level experience and relatively recent physical form. Still, timing is sensitive. Partey's arrival comes immediately before his court date, raising questions across Europe.

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about clubs signing players amid unresolved criminal allegations and the principle of presumption of innocence versus public accountability. With the World Cup cycle ahead and Ghana likely to call on him for international duty, Partey remains both a global figure and a controversial subject in this unfolding narrative. The balance between his athletic future and legal outcome will shape public memory - whether his return to Spain proves a redemption arc or becomes an enduring footnote in a troubled chapter.

Villarreal - English Arsenal - English Premier League - English La Liga - English Transfer News Atlético Madrid - English Champions League Champions League 25/26 matches: fixtures, ties and all the dates Liverpool FCA stunning free-kick goal by Liverpool FC midfielder Dominik Szoboszlai beats Arsenal Golden State Warriors Golden State Warriors eye Klay Thompson reunion to extend championship window See links of interest Soccer News Man City News Liga MX news Liga MX scores Premier League news Premier League scores Champions League scores Premier League Winners Mbappe News Real Madrid News Barcelona News Rooney Bardghji poses with Barcelona jersey FC BARCELONA M. CARMEN TORRES RYAN MITCHELL Actualizado 14/07/2025 - 10:48 CDT

Compartir en Facebook Compartir en Twitter Compartir en Telegram Compartir en Whatsapp Enviar por email Soccer. Nico Williams will not play for Barcelona and renews with Athletic until 2035 Soccer. Donald Trump has no hesitation in naming the greatest soccer player of all time... and he doesn't choose Messi Rooney Bardghji has finally fulfilled his dream. Barcelona announced his signing on Thursday. The 19-year-old Swedish right winger will strengthen Hansi Flick's team. Little by little, Barça is defining its squad for the 2025-26 season. The player has signed for four seasons. Barcelona officially announced the signing of Rooney Bardghji, a young European talent, trained at Malmö, who Deco had been following for more than a year. The Catalan club confirmed that the Sweden U21 international is joining its squad, for whom it has had to pay a small transfer fee, around two million euros, as he was under contract with FC Copenhagen until December. Donald Trump crashes Chelsea's Club World Cup celebration acting like one of the player Bardghji's predisposition to sign for Barça was decisive in his incorporation. A fan and admirer

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of the Catalan team since he was a child, the right winger had other proposals, Mallorca and Porto were some of the clubs that approached him in recent weeks, but his desire was to wear the blue and red shirt. And he has achieved it. The conversations for his signing have been quick. Bet on the future. Bardghji only played six games in the 2024-25 season with FC Copenhagen, the club he joined in 2021, due to a cruciate ligament rupture he suffered the previous season in training, which prevented him from playing until March. He did not play in the final stretch of the season due to another injury. Despite this situation, Barca had no doubts about his signing and his incorporation, the coaches and Deco are sure that he will offer great performance and that it is a great bet for the present and future. With the Danish first team, to which he was promoted in 2022, Rooney Bardghji has played 84 games, scoring 15 goals and providing one assist.

Soccer Barcelona - English Transfer News La Liga - English MLS Barcelona plans a great tribute to Leo Messi at the new Camp Nou. Barcelona superstar Lamine Yamal is facing trouble following his memorable 18th birthday celebration.

Club World Cup Club World Cup 2025 Prize: How much money will the winner of the tournament between Chelsea and PSG earn? See links of interest.

Soccer News Man City News Liga MX news Liga MX scores Premier League news Premier League scores Champions League scores Premier League Winners Mbappe News Real Madrid News Barcelona News Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo holds the trophy after winning the Nations League final soccer match between Portugal and Spain at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany, Monday, June 9, 2025. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner)

LAPRESSE MANUEL MALAGÓN | DIEGO PICÓ RYAN MITCHELL 09/06/2025 - 08:45 CDT

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Enviar por email Cristiano Ronaldo open to playing with Messi...in MLS? Cristiano makes his best Argentinian impression and sends a lovely message to Messi. Cristiano Ronaldo was the happiest man in the world after winning his second UEFA Nations League after Portugal won on penalties against Spain. The Portugal captain scored one of his team's goals, the 2-2 equaliser, and was substituted through injury before extra

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time, so he was unable to take any penalties in the decisive shootout. After the match and still with the euphoria of the celebration, Ronaldo spoke about his future. After a post on his social networks, rumors were sparked about his departure from Saudi Arabia, as if his time there was over. Many teams that are going to play in the Club World Cup moved their chips at the possibility of having Cristiano in the American tournament this summer. Cristiano Ronaldo laughs off unexpected wheelchair moment with fan. However, the Portuguese star made it clear that he is not going to leave. "Nothing is going to change, Al Nassr? Yes," he replied when asked about his immediate future. If his words are taken literally, Cristiano will sign a renewal with the Arab team and thus fulfill his fourth season in Riyadh. "I'm very happy. First, for this generation, it deserved a title. To win for Portugal is very special. I have many titles, but nothing is better than winning for Portugal. The tears and the sense of duty done... It's beautiful. It's our nation. We are a small people, but with great ambition. I have lived in many countries, I have played in many clubs, but when they talk about Portugal it is a special feeling. To be the captain of this generation is a pride. Winning a title is always the highlight of a national team. The future is about thinking short term. I had an injury and that was too much, too much... I pushed myself, because in the national team you have to push yourself." "I already felt it during the warm-up, I had been feeling it for a long time. But for the national team, if I had to break my leg, I would do it. It's a title, I had to play and I gave everything, I got as far as I could. I helped with a goal."

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Roberto Martinez: "I'm very happy for him, for being Spanish, for having given everything for our country. It's a title that we've already won, but this is our motivation, this is our hunger."

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WhatsappEnviar por emailSoccer.Chelsea bombshell: London club says goodbye to Stamford BridgeSoccer.Cristiano Ronaldo gives toxic journalists an ultimatum: "Look me in the eye when I answer your questions"Real Madridis close to reaching an agreement with Alexander-Arnold, with whom it has been working since last December, when the club approached Liverpool to try to reach an understanding for the transfer of the full-back in the winter market, something to which the English club's directors refused. The agreement that the club presents to the English player is for five seasons and, as he will be out of contract on June 30,Liverpool would not receive any money.During that transfer window,there were two attempts by Real Madrid, always with the player's approval, to reinforce a position in which, after Carvajal's injury, Lucas Vazquez was the only specialist in the squad. It is true that Valverde has since appeared in that position, but a solution was sought so that the Uruguayan would not leave the midfield.Cristiano Ronaldo finally addresses why he hasn't married Georgina Rodríguez yetWith the agreement close, thenext step will be to start putting everything into a contract within the law, as Alexander-Arnold is in the final stages of his contract with Liverpool, which expires on June 30, 2025.A signing told in MARCAMARCA has been reporting on the moves made around the England international since Arnold decided in the latter months of 2023 that his time at Liverpool was over.Everything is down toReal Madrid's strategyof looking for players who are out of contract, similar to what they did with Davies, although the Canadian player ended up giving in to Bayern's astronomical renewal offer, which was higher than the one agreed with Los BlancosFrom Valdebebas, they knew that the Arnold deal was a long-term operation, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that he did not renew his contract with Liverpool, something that has happened for now after resisting numerous proposals made from AnfieldFour covers to inform step by stepThe first cover came onOctober 8,when it was reported that Real Madrid were on Arnold's trailOnOctober 17, MARCA reported that the player would not renew with Liverpool, who were beginning to get used to the idea that they would lose one of their most important playersOnDecember 13, Madrid put a dilemma on the table: sign or stick with

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what they have? The injuries to Militao and, above all, Carvajal, opened the debate about the need to strengthen in winter. Madrid tried, although they knew it was impossible, to sign Arnold. Liverpool would not let him leave. On December 28, MARCA reported that the player's desire is to wear the Real Madrid jersey and that he is willing to take all the steps to end up at the Santiago Bernabeu.

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CHESTER, Pa. (AP) — The U.S. women's team stumbled Thursday in its first game since July, allowing a goal in each half that sent Portugal to its first win against the Americans, 2-1 on a night two-time World Cup winner Alex Morgan was feted with a star-studded farewell.

Portugal not only beat the U.S. for the first time in 12 matches, it scored its first goals against the Americans in international play. U.S. coach Emma Hayes said she could tell at practice ahead of the match the nearly four-month layoff could affect the team. "It felt to me like we just hadn't played together for a long time," Hayes said. "I just didn't recognize us."

Rose Lavelle scored only 33 seconds into the friendly for the Americans, only for Inês Pereira to shut them down the rest of the game. Lavelle electrified the crowd that included retired Eagles great Jason Kelce inside Subaru Park — the home field for the MLS' Philadelphia Union — when she scored before many of the more than 17,000 fans had even settled into their seats following a pregame ceremony for Morgan. "Sometimes, you can start the game like that and you think to yourself, I hope we don't sit back and be passive," Hayes said. "That's what we did."

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by administrators and hit by 12-point deduction 2 MIN READ Chelsea's US private equity owners were once ridiculed. Now opinions are changing 5 MIN READ Isak a doubt for Liverpool's Premier League game at Brentford after groin injury 1 MIN READ Portugal's Diana Gomes scored her eighth international goal when she got a header past Phallon Tullis-Joyce that tied the game 1-all in the first half. Portugal had been outscored 40-0 by the United States in the previous 11 matches between them, plus Lavelle's goal. Fatima Pinto scored her fifth international goal from atop the box through traffic late in the second half for the winner that gave Portugal its landmark victory. "There is a standard of winning, and it kind of exceeds all those things, whether it's the time apart or the age of the team or experience. We have a choice now of how we respond," midfielder Sam Coffey said. The U.S. women returned after a 113-day layoff for the start of a true ramp-up toward World Cup qualifications. There's another match scheduled against Portugal and one against New Zealand to close out the three-match window at the end of the month. The team needs the work before the results truly matter. "We didn't look like the team that we've been working on but that's what happens when you've got 113 days apart," Hayes said. With Morgan in the house, the stadium underwent a makeover in honor of her big night. Her greatest moments (such as her four-goal game for the U-20 women's World Cup team) were recognized in stand-up cutouts that lined outside the stadium. Girls lined up at the Alex Morgan pre-wrap station to get their hair "game-day ready" and T-shirts and banners with her name on them were the hot items at merch stores. Fans everywhere raised signs showing Morgan love in her national team send-off. Even national team members who couldn't take the field wouldn't miss Morgan's night. The 36-year-old Morgan retired from soccer last year when she became pregnant with her second child. American forward Trinity Rodman was on hand for Morgan's celebration but did not play as she recovers from a knee injury. Rodman has only played for the Americans once since they won the 2024 Olympic gold medal in France. Abby Wambach, Kelley O'Hara and Megan Rapinoe also attended the game. Besides World Cup titles in 2015 and 2019, Morgan also won an Olympic gold medal in 2012. She

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played in 224 matches for the U.S. ? and was honored with a framed jersey with that total as the number ? with 123 goals and 53 assists. She was chosen the U.S. Soccer Player of the Year in 2012 and 2018. Morgan also played in 150 NWSL matches over her career, which included stints with the Portland Thorns and the Orlando Pride. She rejoined the Wave in May as a minority stakeholder. Hayes only had Morgan for one game during her tenure. But the former Chelsea coach has been around the sport long enough to appreciate Morgan's impact on the game ? and for her to be feted at the same stadium where she scored her first national team goal in 2010. ?There was nothing she didn't achieve,? Hayes said a day earlier. ?She was a player that epitomized everything this program is about. She's an unbelievable credit to her family because her drive, her desire, her determination to prove herself at the highest level is second to none. ?You can't go anywhere in this country without them talking about Alex Morgan, and I think the sport should show a lot of gratitude to that, because it's important for our players to be recognizable. And she is, without question, in recent times, one of the most recognizable faces in our sport.?

\_\_\_AP soccer:  
<https://apnews.com/hub/soccer>

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) ? Lionel Messi has finally agreed to a new contract with Inter Miami, a deal that required several months to complete and ensures that the sport's biggest icon will be with the Major League Soccer club for its planned move into a new stadium next year. The deal was announced Thursday, one day before Inter Miami's playoff opener against Nashville. Messi's team ? the No. 3 seed in the Eastern Conference ? will play host to Game 1 of that best-of-three series on Friday night. The team announced the move in a social media post, one showing Messi signing the contract inside the new stadium that remains under construction. ?HE'S HOME,? the team said in the post. ?It makes me really happy to stay here and to continue with this project that, besides being a dream, has become a beautiful reality ? playing in this stadium, at Miami Freedom Park,? Messi said in remarks distributed by the club. ?Since I arrived in Miami, I've been very happy, so I'm truly glad to keep going here.? Inter Miami said it was a three-year deal through 2028. The notion of Messi playing two or three more seasons

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certainly would serve as a boost to ticket sales at the stadium the team has been building near Miami International Airport. The team has been selling ticket packages and taking deposits on seats in the new park for more than a year, all with the assumption that Messi would remain part of the franchise.

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His decision to stay in Miami is big for both the club and for MLS. Messi's was the league's MVP last season and is the overwhelming choice to win the award again this year, which would make him only the second two-time winner in league history and the first to win it in back-to-back years. Preki won the MVP award in 1997 and 2003. "To enjoy him, watching him enjoy doing the things he is doing, he's very, very competitive and he tries to translate that to the team," Inter Miami coach Javier Mascherano said Thursday. "The best way to help him is trying to do the right things ... he has to be comfortable on the pitch. He's comfortable when things are working in the right way. "With him, when we do things the right way, we'll have many chances to have success."

Messi won MLS' Golden Boot this season after scoring 29 goals, five more than LAFC's Denis Bouanga and Nashville's Sam Surridge. He also had 19 assists, and his 48 total goal contributions was one shy of matching the MLS record of 49 set by Carlos Vela in 2019. This season, Messi had multiple goals in five consecutive games - making him the first MLS player to achieve such a feat - and had 10 multigoal games, another league record. The previous mark was eight such games.

"We promised our fans that we would dream big to build an iconic club. A club that represents the passion, hard work and dedication of all those that came before us to create a Miami built on dreams," Inter Miami managing owner Jorge Mas said. "Leo signing through 2028 is an ode to our amazing city."

Messi is 38, which makes this contract likely his last as a professional player. He has spent well over half his life playing at the pro level, making his debut with Barcelona as a 17-year-old in 2004. It is not clear how long Messi, the eight-time Ballon d'Or

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winner and generally considered the sport's biggest star, plans to keep playing. He led Argentina to the World Cup title in 2022; his country will aim to defend that trophy when the tournament is played next June and July in the U.S., Mexico and Canada. His Inter Miami team will look different in 2026, for certain. Messi agreed to join the club in July 2023 on what was a 2 1/2-year contract, and it wound up becoming a reunion of longtime Barcelona teammates when he was eventually joined by Jordi Alba, Sergio Busquets and Luis Suarez. Busquets and Alba are both retiring after this season; Alba made the decision to step away just months after agreeing to a three-year contract. Suarez's future is unclear, and it's believed retirement could be an option for him as well. But Messi will play on, into 2026 anyway. He and the team were closing in toward the finish line of this drawn-out contract negotiation last month, and it wasn't clear why it took several more weeks to get Messi to finally sign the deal. His first contract with Inter Miami was worth an estimated \$150 million at the time. It immediately began paying off, with Inter Miami winning its first trophy — the 2023 Leagues Cup — shortly after he arrived. Last season, when he won the MLS MVP award for the first time, he did so while missing 15 of Inter Miami's 34 regular-season matches because of injuries or commitments to Argentina's national team. Even with those absences, Inter Miami won its first Supporters' Shield by having MLS' best regular-season record — then got upset in the first round of the playoffs. The club has seen a massive rise in global popularity with Messi on the roster. His pink No. 10 jersey has been MLS' highest seller since he joined the league, and he has added to his massive off-field business empire since coming to the U.S. — even starring in a Super Bowl ad last year. "Our vision was to bring the best players to Inter Miami and to this city, and that's exactly what we have done," Inter Miami co-owner and soccer icon David Beckham said. "We brought the best player to have ever played the game to our city. That shows our commitment to Miami, but it also shows Leo's commitment to the city, to the club, and to the game. He's still as committed as he's ever been and he still wants to win."

\_\_\_AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer> LIVERPOOL, England (AP) — Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk revealed he led a players-only meeting at the start

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of the week after a run of four straight losses. Van Dijk said "everyone was sad" after the 2-1 loss to Manchester United in the Premier League on Sunday, which came after defeats to Crystal Palace, Galatasaray and Chelsea before the international break. So, following a debrief with manager Arne Slot, Liverpool's players got together at the training ground on Monday and centre-back Van Dijk delivered a message to his teammates. Explaining that it "wasn't a crisis meeting," Van Dijk said: "I wanted to say some things. It's not something I do after every game. After my meeting, everyone was happy." Liverpool responded by beating Eintracht Frankfurt 5-1 in the Champions League on Wednesday, avoiding tying a 72-year club record for losses in a row. "We had to stay calm and block out all the noise from the outside because that's something you can't control," Van Dijk said. "The only way to get out of a situation like that is to stay together, keep your mind on the task ahead, try to improve, keep the confidence, embrace the moment. They are all things that are easier to say than actually do but if you want to get out of it, you have to do it." Liverpool has dropped to fourth in the Premier League, four points behind leader Arsenal, after eight games as it heads into a match at Brentford on Saturday. \_\_\_\_AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer>

MILAN (AP) — Antonio Conte is looking to whip his players into shape like a "tiger tamer" for Napoli's Serie A match against his former team Inter Milan on Saturday. Napoli is facing Inter at the worst possible moment for the defending champion, which is reeling from Tuesday's 6-2 defeat at PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League — the first time one of coach Conte's teams has conceded six goals in a single match. Conte appeared unusually calm on the sidelines during the game and was not his usual vociferous, strident self. "I always try to help my players," Conte said. "Certainly it was my fault that I was less aggressive on the bench and we lost 6-2. Next time I'll bring the whip and a stool like a tiger tamer." It was Napoli's second successive defeat — after last weekend's loss at Torino in Serie A — as it struggles to cope with an injury crisis and incorporating new faces. "We added nine players in the summer, that has cost us in terms of chemistry," Conte said. "The old guys, including me, need to rediscover their spirit, the new guys need to learn to fit in and be humble



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and silent. Related Stories Historic soccer club Sheffield Wednesday taken over by administrators and hit by 12-point deduction 2 MIN READ Chelsea's US private equity owners were once ridiculed. Now opinions are changing 5 MIN READ Isak a doubt for Liverpool's Premier League game at Brentford after groin injury 1 MIN READ Napoli welcomed back Scott McTominay against PSV while Rasmus Hojlund could make his return from injury against Inter. But Romelu Lukaku, Stanislav Lobotka and Amir Rrahmani are still sidelined. Napoli, Inter and Roma are level on 15 points, one behind league leader AC Milan. The Rossoneri could be four clear before the match kicks off in Naples as they host promoted Pisa on Friday. Roma visits Sassuolo on Sunday. Key matchups Inter and Napoli have shared the title over the past three years ? with Inter in 2024 splitting Napoli's two wins. Conte also led Inter to the crown in 2021. Inter is on a run of seven straight wins in all competitions. It beat another title rival in Roma last weekend and routed Union Saint-Gilloise 4-0 on Tuesday. Under-pressure Juventus coach Igor Tudor returns to his former club when the Bianconeri visit Lazio. He resigned as Lazio coach in 2024 after three months in charge. Juventus is four points behind Milan but hasn't won since Sept. 13. Milan is heavily favored to beat bottom club Pisa but its one defeat this season came on the opening day against another promoted club, Cremonese. Atalanta is the only undefeated team in Serie A. It is only eighth, however, having drawn five of its seven matches ? the most in the division. It travels to Cremonese, which has played out four stalemates. Players to watch Bologna winger Riccardo Orsolini leads the Serie A scoring charts with five goals. The 28-year-old has netted in each of his past four league matches and is looking to continue that streak at struggling Fiorentina. Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer is proving almost unbeatable this season. The 36-year-old pulled off a number of fine saves against Roma to help his team to a 1-0 win and Inter has conceded just one goal in its past five matches in all competitions. Out of action Bologna coach Vincenzo Italiano is almost certain to miss the trip to his former club Fiorentina because he is in hospital with pneumonia. Milan has an injury list as bad as Napoli's. As well as Christian Pulisic, the Rossoneri will also be without Adrien Rabiot, Ardon Jashari and Pervis

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Estupiñán, while Christopher Nkunku and Ruben Loftus-Cheek are also not fully recovered. Como forward Jesús Rodríguez and Parma defender Abdoulaye Niakhate Ndiaye are the only two players serving suspensions this weekend. Parma hosts Como on Saturday. Off the field With the Spanish league having called off a game in Miami, pressure is mounting for Serie A to cancel plans for AC Milan to play Como in Australia in February. ?Serie A must do the right thing in the face of growing isolation and withdraw its proposal,? a statement from fan group Football Supporters Europe said on Wednesday. ?If not, we urge the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), which still needs to decide on this proposal, to respect the voice of fans.?Pisa and Hellas Verona fans have been banned from away matches for three months following clashes last weekend. The suspension starts with Pisa?s match at Milan on Friday. Construction is underway for a new stadium on the outskirts of Venice, where Serie B club Venezia hopes to play from 2027-28.\_\_\_\_AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer>