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# Neymar



**Neymar da Silva Santos Júnior** (born 5 February 1992), also known as **Neymar Júnior**, is a Brazilian professional footballer who plays as a forward for Saudi Pro League club Al Hilal and the Brazil national team. Regarded as one of the greatest players of his generation, he is renowned for his flamboyant style of play, passing abilities, and two-footedness.

Neymar made his professional debut with Santos in 2009, and in 2011, he helped them win their first Copa Libertadores in nearly 50 years.<sup>[3]</sup> In 2013, he joined Barcelona and became part of an attacking trio with Lionel Messi and Luis Suárez, dubbed MSN. Winning the continental treble of La Liga, the Copa del Rey, and the UEFA Champions League in the trio's first season, Neymar was the joint-top scorer of the Champions League campaign and top scorer in the Copa del Rey. Neymar joined Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) in 2017 in a transfer costing €222 million, making him the most expensive player ever.<sup>[note 1][6]</sup> There, he won Ligue 1 Player of the Year, won five Ligue 1 titles, and was integral to PSG being runners-up in the 2019–20 Champions League. He also ranks as PSG's fourth-highest all-time top goalscorer, despite reoccurring injuries consistently disrupting his playing time. In 2023, he joined Al Hilal in a lucrative deal.

Debuting for Brazil aged 18, Neymar is the nation's all-time top goalscorer, with 79 goals in 128 matches. He won the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, winning the Golden Ball. In the 2014 FIFA World Cup, he was named in the Dream Team. He captained Brazil to their first Olympic gold medal in men's football at the 2016 Summer Olympics, having already achieving a silver medal at the 2012 edition. Helping Brazil to a runner-up finish at the 2021 Copa América, he was jointly awarded Best Player. In the 2022 World Cup, he became the third Brazilian player to score in three World Cups, after Pelé and Ronaldo. Neymar has won a record six Samba Gold awards.

Neymar has been named in the FIFA FIFPro World11 and the UEFA Team of the Year twice and the UEFA Champions League Squad of the Season three times. He finished third for the FIFA Ballon d'Or in 2015 and 2017 and won the FIFA Puskás Award in 2011. Neymar has scored at least 100 goals for three different clubs, being one of a few players to do so,<sup>[7]</sup> and is the highest-scoring Brazilian player in Champions League history.<sup>[8]</sup> SportsPro named Neymar the world's most marketable athlete in 2012 and 2013, and ESPN cited him as the world's fourth-most-famous athlete in 2016. In 2017, Time included him in its annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world.<sup>[9]</sup> France Football ranked Neymar the world's third-highest-paid footballer of 2018. Forbes ranked him the world's third-highest-paid athlete of 2019,<sup>[10]</sup> dropping to fourth in 2020.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Early life

Neymar da Silva Santos Júnior was born in Mogi das Cruzes, São Paulo, to Neymar Santos Sr. and Nadine da Silva and had a Christian upbringing.<sup>[12][13]</sup> He inherited his name from his father, who is a former footballer and became his son's advisor as Neymar's talents began to grow.<sup>[14]</sup> Neymar comments on his father's role: "My father has been by my side since I was little. He takes care of things, my finances and my family."<sup>[15]</sup> Growing up, Neymar combined his love of futsal with street football.<sup>[16]</sup> Neymar said that futsal had a massive influence on him growing up, helping him develop his technique, speed of thought and ability to perform moves in tight spaces.<sup>[17]</sup>

In 2003, Neymar moved with his family to São Vicente, where he began playing for youth side Portuguesa Santista.<sup>[18]</sup> Then, later in 2003, they moved to Santos, where Neymar joined Santos.<sup>[19]</sup> With the success of his youth career and added income, the family bought their first property, a house next to Vila Belmiro, Santos' home stadium. Their quality of

Neymar



Neymar playing for Al Hilal in 2023

### Personal information

Full name	Neymar da Silva Santos Júnior <sup>[1]</sup>
Date of birth	5 February 1992 <sup>[1]</sup>
Place of birth	Mogi das Cruzes, Brazil <sup>[2]</sup>
Height	1.75 m (5 ft 9 in) <sup>[1]</sup>
Position(s)	Forward, attacking midfielder, winger

### Team information

Current team	Al Hilal
Number	10

### Youth career

1999–2003	Portuguesa Santista
2003–2009	Santos

### Senior career\*

Years	Team	Apps (Gls)
2009–2013	Santos	177 (107)
2013–2017	Barcelona	123 (68)
2017–2023	Paris Saint-Germain	112 (82)
2023–	Al Hilal	3 (0)

### International career†

2009	Brazil U17	3 (1)
2011	Brazil U20	7 (9)
2012–2016	Brazil U23	14 (8)
2010–	Brazil	128 (79)

### Medal record

[show]

### Men's Football

Representing Brazil

### FIFA Confederations Cup

Winner	2013 Brazil
Runner-up	2021 Brazil

### Copa América

Runner-up	2021 Brazil
Summer Olympics	

G	2016 Rio de Janeiro	Team
S	2012 London	Team

### U-20 South American Championship

Winner	2011 Peru
Runner-up	2013 Chile

family life improved, as at age 15, Neymar was earning 10,000 reais per month and at 16, 125,000 reais per month. At 17, he signed his first full professional contract, was upgraded to the Santos first team, and began signing his first sponsorship deals.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Club career

### Santos

#### Youth

Neymar began playing football at an early age and he was soon spotted by Santos who offered him a contract in 2003, where he was inducted into their youth academy, which has, in the past, produced Brazilian internationals like Coutinho, Clodoaldo, Diego, Elano and Alex. He also joined the likes of Pepe, Pelé and Robinho in starting out his career at the club, nicknamed Peixe.<sup>[21]</sup> While in the youth academy, Neymar met Paulo Henrique Ganso, becoming good friends in the process. Aged 14, Neymar travelled to Spain for try outs with the Real Madrid youth team. He did not stay in Madrid, however, as his father decided at the time that he preferred the young prodigy to keep growing up while playing at Santos.<sup>[22][23]</sup>

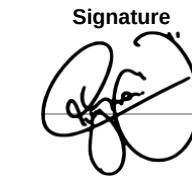
#### 2009: Debut season

Neymar made his professional debut on 7 March 2009, despite being only 17 years old. He was brought on for the last thirty minutes, in a 2–1 win against Oeste.<sup>[16]</sup> The following week he scored his first goal for Santos against Mogi Mirim. One month later, on 11 April, Neymar scored the decisive goal in a 2–1 win against Palmeiras in the 2009 Campeonato Paulista semi-final first leg.<sup>[24]</sup> In the final, however, Santos suffered a 4–2 aggregate defeat to Corinthians.<sup>[25]</sup> In his first season, Neymar racked up 14 goals in 48 games.<sup>[16]</sup>

#### 2010: Campeonato Paulista success

Neymar continued his ascendancy in 2010, and, on 15 April, he scored five goals for Santos in an 8–1 rout of Guarani in the qualifying stages of the Brazilian Cup.<sup>[27]</sup> Following the 2010 Campeonato Paulista in which Neymar scored 14 goals in 19 games,<sup>[21]</sup> the club were crowned champions after a 5–5 aggregate win over Santo André in the finals.<sup>[28]</sup> Neymar was subsequently given the award for the best player in the competition.<sup>[29]</sup> Neymar's performances for Santos drew comparisons to other Brazilians, including Robinho and Pelé.<sup>[30]</sup>

In 2010, Santos rejected a £12 million bid for him from English Premier League team West Ham United,<sup>[31]</sup> and later an offer from another English club, Chelsea, reported to be in the region of £20 million.<sup>[32]</sup> Despite the unwillingness of Santos to sell and Neymar himself stating: "I'm focused only on Santos",<sup>[33]</sup> his agent, Wagner Ribeiro, indicated that Neymar's career was elsewhere, stating: "He wants to become the best player in the world. The chances of him doing that while playing in Brazil are zero."<sup>[32]</sup> One year later Neymar said, in an interview with the Daily Telegraph, that he had been happy with Chelsea's interest in him as it was a "dream" of his "to play in Europe", while also stating that at the time it had been the right decision to stay in Brazil.<sup>[34]</sup>



\*Club domestic league appearances and goals, correct as of 29 September 2023 (UTC)

† National team caps and goals, correct as of 04:10, 18 October 2023

"The 18-year-old is a magnificent prospect. He is sleek and skilful, able to beat the defender on either side, capable of combining well, and full of tricks he can put to productive use in and around the penalty area."

—South American football journalist Tim Vickery on Neymar in 2010.<sup>[26]</sup>

On 30 November 2010, Santos sold a 5% share of future transfer fees that he would receive to an investment group, Terceira Estrela Investimentos S.A. (TEISA), for R\$ 3,549,900 (€1.5 million).<sup>[35]</sup> The previous year, his family had sold a 40% stake in Neymar's sporting rights to the DIS Esporte group who had been a long-term strategic partner of Santos' football club.<sup>[36]</sup>

Despite his first two seasons being highly successful, having ended the 2010 season with an impressive 42 goals in 60 games, problems had been identified, namely Neymar's apparent taste for diving when tackled, rather than attempting to continue his run, and his attitude. The latter came to the forefront during a match with Atlético Goianiense, on 15 September 2010, when the Santos' manager, Dorival Júnior, appointed another player to take the penalty awarded for a foul on Neymar. His decision was based on the fact that Neymar had missed a crucial penalty during the Copa do Brasil final of that year, even if Santos went on to win. Reacting to this, Neymar turned his back on his manager, had to be calmed down by a linesman and argued with his captain, Edu Dracena. The fallout from this event was that Dorival Júnior wished to have Neymar suspended for two weeks, but the board sided with the player and promptly sacked the manager. Despite Neymar's apologies over the incident, some doubts still remain about his attitude.<sup>[16]</sup> In December 2010, aged just 18, Neymar came third for the 2010 South American Footballer of the Year, behind Andrés D'Alessandro and Juan Sebastián Verón.<sup>[37]</sup>

#### 2011: Puskás Award

Neymar scored six goals during Santos' run to the 2011 Copa Libertadores Finals, tying him for third top goalscorer,<sup>[38]</sup> including the clinching goal of Santos' 4–3 aggregate win over Cerro Porteño in the semi-finals.<sup>[39]</sup> In the two-legged final, Santos faced Uruguayan side Peñarol and drew the first leg 0–0 in Montevideo.<sup>[40]</sup> At home in the second leg, Neymar opened the scoring in the 46th minute as Santos held on for a 2–1 win and Neymar won Man of the Match honours.<sup>[41][42]</sup> The win brought Santos their first Copa Libertadores triumph since 1963, when Brazilian legend Pelé was playing for the club.<sup>[43][44]</sup>

In September 2011, Santos club president Luís Ribeiro threatened to report Real Madrid to FIFA following reports that they had attempted to sign Neymar to a pre-contract agreement, and denied that such an agreement was in place.<sup>[45]</sup> On 9 November, Neymar and Santos agreed to a contract extension that would see the player stay with the club until after the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. The deal reportedly increased Neymar's

wages by 50%, to the levels that top European clubs would be paying him.<sup>[46]</sup> On 14 December, Neymar scored the opening goal for Santos as they defeated Kashiwa Reysol 3–1 in the semi-finals of the FIFA Club World Cup at the Toyota Stadium in Toyota, Japan, but failed to score against Barcelona in the final on 18 December, where Santos were defeated 4–0, finishing as runners-up in the competition.<sup>[47]</sup> He won the 2011 FIFA Puskás Award for scoring a solo goal in the Brasileirão Série A against Flamengo, in a 5–4 loss. On 31 December, he won the 2011 South American Footballer of the Year award for the first time, by a record margin, following in the footsteps of Diego Maradona, Romário, Pelé and Zico.<sup>[48]</sup>



Neymar training ahead of the 2011 Copa Libertadores finals against Peñarol

## 2012: South America's best player

On 5 February 2012, when he turned 20, Neymar scored his 100th goal as a professional football player, against Palmeiras in the Campeonato Paulista.<sup>[49][50]</sup> On 25 February – he scored two goals, one of which was from 25-yards – and created two assists to help his side to a 6–1 win over Ponte Preta.<sup>[51]</sup> On 7 March, Neymar netted a hat-trick as Santos saw off Brazilian rivals Internacional 3–1 in the Copa Libertadores Group stage match.<sup>[52]</sup> On 29 March, he scored a brace against Guaratinguetá in a 5–0 victory.<sup>[53]</sup> In the fixture against São Paulo on 29 April 2012, Neymar scored a hat-trick with the match ending 3–1.<sup>[54]</sup> Thereafter, he went on to score twice in the first<sup>[55]</sup> and second legs<sup>[56]</sup> in the 2012 Campeonato Paulista Finals against Guarani, which ended 7–2 on aggregate. Neymar finished the 2012 Campeonato Paulista with 20 goals and was voted the Best player and Best Forward, and Santos were crowned champions. He was joint top scorer in the Copa Libertadores with eight goals, after Santos were beaten over two legs by eventual champions Corinthians in the semi-finals.

On 25 August 2012, he scored a brace in the 2–1 away win at Palmeiras.<sup>[57]</sup> On 3 November, in the Brasileiro Série A away fixture at Cruzeiro, Neymar scored a hat-trick and assisted Felipe Anderson's goal, to help his side to a 4–0 win.<sup>[58]</sup> Neymar finished off the 2012 season in style, first setting-up Victor Andrade's equaliser, then scoring twice, to give Santos a 3–1 home win over Palmeiras on 1 December.<sup>[59]</sup> Neymar was voted the Best Player of the 2012 Recopa Sudamericana, with himself scoring in the second leg to win the title 2–0 on aggregate. He finished the 2012 Campeonato Brasileiro Série A with 14 goals and being voted the Best forward. Neymar finished the 2012 season, being awarded the Golden Ball, Arthur Friedenreich Award and Armando Nogueira Trophy. He was one of three finalists in the 2012 FIFA Puskás Award and finished runners-up behind Miroslav Stoch. He won the 2012 South American Footballer of the Year, retaining his award and winning it ahead of the likes of Ronaldinho.<sup>[60]</sup>

## 2013: Final season

Neymar started the 2013 Campeonato Paulista scoring twice in the first match, which ended a 3–1 win over São Bernardo on 19 January 2013.<sup>[61]</sup> On 3 February, in the Paulista fixture against São Paulo, where Santos won 3–1, with Neymar scoring and making two assists.<sup>[62]</sup> On 18 March, Neymar told that he had a "dream of playing in Europe, for a big club like Barcelona, Real Madrid and Chelsea." But he went on to say, "There's no point in speculating when I'll leave Santos. I'll leave when I want to."<sup>[63]</sup>

Neymar scored all four goals, had another disallowed and hit the post as Santos beat União Barbarense 4–0 in the Paulista on 13 April.<sup>[64]</sup> On 25 April, his agent and father revealed that Neymar intended to leave for Europe before the 2014 FIFA World Cup.<sup>[65]</sup> Ahead of his last match for Santos, on 26 May against Flamengo, Neymar was in tears during the national anthem.<sup>[66]</sup>

## Barcelona

On 24 May 2013, Santos announced that they had received two offers for Neymar. The following day, Neymar announced he would sign with Barcelona on 27 May and join the team after playing in the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup. Neither Neymar nor the clubs released details on the transfer fee or personal terms, save to say he signed a five-year deal.<sup>[67]</sup> On 3 June, Neymar was unveiled by Barcelona after passing medical tests and signing a contract that would keep him at the club through June 2018.<sup>[68]</sup>



Neymar during his unveiling at Barcelona in June 2013

Neymar was presented at the Camp Nou in front of 56,500 fans, a record turnout for a Brazilian player.<sup>[69]</sup> Club vice-president Josep Maria Bartomeu initially said Neymar's transfer fee was €57.1 million and his release clause set at €190 million.<sup>[70][71]</sup> Barcelona's doctor suggested he might need to gain weight to be able to cope physically in Spanish football.<sup>[72]</sup>

## Transfer investigation

In January 2014, the prosecutor's office in Madrid began investigating the transfer fee that Barcelona paid for Neymar.<sup>[73]</sup> The documents submitted to the authorities on request contained contradictory information.<sup>[73]</sup> On 23 January 2014, Rosell resigned from his position as president.<sup>[74]</sup> A day later, the details of the transfer were revealed by Barcelona; the transfer had in fact cost them €86.2 million (£71.5 million),<sup>[75][76][77]</sup> with Neymar's parents confirmed to have received a €40 million sum.<sup>[78][79]</sup> In the aftermath, Barcelona and Bartomeu were charged with tax fraud.<sup>[80]</sup>

## 2013–14: Adapting to Spain

On 30 July 2013, Barcelona drew 2–2 against Lechia Gdańsk in a pre-season friendly; Neymar made his unofficial debut when he came on as a substitute.<sup>[81]</sup> He scored his first goal for the club in a 7–1 win against a Thailand XI on 7 August at the Rajamangala National Stadium.<sup>[82]</sup> Neymar made his competitive debut for Barcelona during the opening game of the 2013–14 La Liga season as a 63rd-minute substitute for

Alexis Sánchez in a 7–0 win against Levante.<sup>[83]</sup> On 21 August, he scored his first competitive goal for the club in the first leg of the 2013 Supercopa de España against Atlético Madrid: seven minutes after coming on as a substitute for Pedro, he headed Dani Alves' cross to equalise in a 1–1 draw at the Vicente Calderón Stadium as Barcelona won on the away goals rule for his first trophy at the club.<sup>[84]</sup> On 18 September, he made his UEFA Champions League debut, assisting a Gerard Piqué goal as Barça beat Ajax 4–0 in their opening match of the 2013–14 tournament.

Six days later, Neymar scored his first goal in La Liga in Barcelona's 4–1 defeat of Real Sociedad at Camp Nou.<sup>[85]</sup> On 26 October, he made his first El Clásico appearance, scoring the opening goal and assisting the team's winning goal scored by Alexis Sánchez as Barcelona beat Real Madrid 2–1 at Camp Nou.<sup>[86]</sup> On 11 December, Neymar recorded his first three Champions League goals as he scored a hat-trick in a 6–1 win over Celtic in Barcelona's final Group H match.<sup>[87]</sup>

## 2014–15: The treble and individual success

On 13 September 2014, after appearing as a substitute, Neymar scored his first two goals of the 2014–15 season, helping Barcelona beat Athletic Bilbao 2–0. On 27 September, he scored a hat-trick against Granada in a 6–0 win<sup>[88]</sup> and scored in his next three La Liga matches, including the opening goal in a 1–3 loss to Real Madrid at Estadio Santiago Bernabéu.<sup>[89]</sup>

On 24 January 2015, Neymar scored twice and assisted two more goals in a 6–0 win at Elche.<sup>[90]</sup> On 28 January, he scored his 20th goal of the season in a 3–2 Copa del Rey quarter-final win over Atlético Madrid.<sup>[91]</sup> On 4 March, Neymar scored twice in Barcelona's 3–1 Copa del Rey semi-final win over Villarreal to qualify the club for its 37th Spanish Cup final.<sup>[92]</sup> On 21 April, Neymar took his tally to 30 goals for the season by scoring twice in Barcelona's 2–0 Champions League quarter-final win over Paris Saint-Germain (PSG).<sup>[93]</sup>

In May, the closing month of the season, Neymar scored the last goal in a 3–0 win against Bayern Munich in the first leg of the Champions League semi-final.<sup>[94]</sup> A week later, he scored both the team's goals in a 3–2-second leg defeat at the Allianz Arena to ensure Barça would qualify for the 2015 UEFA Champions League Final.<sup>[95]</sup> He also opened the scoring with a header in a 2–0 league win versus Real Sociedad, a result which gave Barça a four-point lead over Real Madrid with only two matches remaining.<sup>[96]</sup>



Barcelona fans prior to the 2015 UEFA Champions League Final in Berlin holding up pictures of the attacking trio, Messi, Suárez and Neymar (MSN)

After securing the league title on 17 May with a 1–0 win over Atlético Madrid at the Vicente Calderón, Barcelona defeated Athletic Bilbao 3–1 at Camp Nou in the 2015 Copa del Rey Final on 30 May, with Neymar scoring the second goal for Barça.<sup>[97]</sup> With Barcelona's victory likely, he performed tricks with the ball in the final stages of the game, which was deemed unsporting by opponent Andoni Iraola. Barcelona manager Luis Enrique claimed that it had to be understood that such behaviour was acceptable in Brazil, while Neymar himself did not apologise.<sup>[98]</sup>

On 6 June, Neymar scored the third goal for Barça in the 3–1 Champions League Final defeat of Italian champions Juventus at Berlin's Olympiastadion, ensuring the club won its fifth European Cup.<sup>[99]</sup> This made Barcelona the first club in history to twice win the treble of domestic league, domestic cup and European Cup.<sup>[100]</sup> On a personal note, he became the eighth player in football's history to win both the Copa Libertadores and the UEFA Champions League, and the first player to score in final victories in both competitions.<sup>[101]</sup> Neymar ended the season with 39 goals in all competitions and 10 in the Champions League, making him joint highest scorer with Cristiano Ronaldo and teammate Lionel Messi in the latter competition.<sup>[102]</sup> He was the first player apart from those two to top the competition's scoring list, since compatriot Kaká in 2006–07.<sup>[103]</sup> Barcelona's attacking trio of Messi, Luis Suárez and Neymar, dubbed "MSN", ended with 122 goals, the most in a season for an attacking trio in Spanish football history.<sup>[104]</sup>



Neymar playing for Barcelona against Villarreal in La Liga in 2015.

## 2015–16: Domestic double

Due to having the mumps, Neymar was expected to miss the 2015 UEFA Super Cup and the 2015 Supercopa de España.<sup>[105]</sup> On 17 October, Neymar scored four goals in Barcelona's 5–2 home win over Rayo Vallecano in La Liga, taking his total to eight goals for the season.<sup>[106]</sup> On 21 November, Neymar scored one and provided a back heel assist for Andrés Iniesta in Barcelona's 4–0 away win against Real Madrid.<sup>[107]</sup> He scored twice in a 4–0 home win over Real Sociedad on 28 November, taking his La Liga total to 14 goals in 12 games.<sup>[108]</sup> On 30 November, Neymar was shortlisted for the 2015 FIFA Ballon d'Or alongside Messi and Ronaldo, and subsequently came third.<sup>[109][110]</sup> On 22 May 2016, Neymar scored a late goal in Barcelona's 2–0 extra time win over Sevilla in the 2016 Copa del Rey Final at the Vicente Calderón, as the club celebrated winning the domestic double for the second consecutive season, following their treble victory from the previous season.<sup>[111][112]</sup> The front three of Messi, Suárez and Neymar finished the season with 131 goals, breaking the record they had set the previous year for most goals by an attacking trio in a single season.<sup>[113]</sup>

## 2016–17: Final season

In Barcelona's 6–1 victory over PSG in the Champions League round of 16, Neymar had a miraculous and heroic role in Barcelona's comeback, by scoring two goals and assisted the decisive goal of Sergi Roberto during the closing seven-minute sequence, of which he was named man of the match, based on his efforts.<sup>[115][116]</sup> Overcoming the 4–0 loss to PSG in the first leg from 14 February 2017, this second leg match became the biggest comeback in Champions League history.<sup>[117]</sup>

On 2 April, Neymar scored his 100th goal for Barcelona in his 177th appearance for the club, netting in a 4–1 win over Granada.<sup>[118][119]</sup> On 27 May, Neymar scored in the 2017 Copa del Rey Final, his 105th goal for the club, as Barcelona defeated Alavés 3–1 at the Vicente Calderón in Madrid.<sup>[120]</sup>

### Desire to leave Barcelona

According to former Barcelona teammate Xavi, Neymar informed his teammates of his desire to leave Barcelona at Messi's wedding in June 2017.<sup>[121]</sup> By July 2017, media speculation emerged that Neymar wanted to join PSG, with the club holding talks with Barcelona officials. At 25-years old, Neymar was motivated to leave Barcelona to step out of Messi's shadow and be the sole star player, increasing the likelihood of him winning the Ballon d'Or.<sup>[122]</sup> Barcelona president, Bartomeu, admitted he was powerless to stop him from wanting to leave: "Neymar is one of our best players and so we don't want to lose that player," he said. "We want him to continue with us. He still has four years of his contract so there is nothing else to say [...] You know that players decide if they want to leave, they can decide."<sup>[123]</sup> On 2 August 2017, Neymar asked Barcelona to allow him to leave.<sup>[124]</sup>

"While there is a 1% chance, we will have 99% faith."

— Neymar after the 4–0 loss against PSG on 15 February 2017<sup>[114]</sup>



Neymar (middle) on the ball during the Champions League second leg win against PSG in February 2017

### Paris Saint-Germain

On 3 August 2017, Barcelona announced that Neymar's legal representatives made a payment of €222 million<sup>[125]</sup> to the club, equal to the release clause of his contract, which constituted the most expensive transfer ever. The club informed UEFA so that they can determine any disciplinary responsibilities that may arise from this case.<sup>[4]</sup> According to the BBC, in Spain, the release clause must be activated by the footballer himself. The situation was unusual, in that the fee was paid to the club directly, after La Liga had refused to receive the payment.<sup>[126][5]</sup> Usually, the buyout clause is deposited with La Liga in order to release the player from his contract, and the league then passes the money to the selling club. However, La Liga rejected the payment—citing violation of Financial Fair Play (FFP) rules by PSG, who are backed by money from Gulf state Qatar.<sup>[127]</sup>

Neymar joined PSG on a contract that would run until 2022.<sup>[128]</sup> He was offered the number 10 shirt by Javier Pastore as a "welcome gift".<sup>[129][130]</sup> It was believed that PSG signed Neymar to increase their chances of winning the Champions League.<sup>[131]</sup>

The relationship between Neymar and Barcelona fans was tainted following his unexpected transfer to PSG, with some fans burning Barcelona jerseys with Neymar's name on it.<sup>[132]</sup> In his presentation on 17 August, Neymar said that leaving Barcelona was one of the toughest decisions in his life.<sup>[133]</sup> The presentation was reported to have been watched by 85 million viewers in Brazil.<sup>[134]</sup> Neymar was unequivocally considered the star player of Ligue 1; Lille's general director Marc Inglá credited the presence of Neymar in Ligue 1 to potentially accelerating it into a powerhouse league in Europe, alongside the Premier League and La Liga.<sup>[135]</sup>



Out of the shadow of Messi, Neymar was viewed as the face of Ligue 1 football



Neymar with Nasser Al-Khelaifi, the PSG chairman and chief executive officer

### Contract breach lawsuit

On 27 August 2017, Barcelona filed a lawsuit against Neymar, demanding he return the contract renewal bonus he received as well as €8.5 million in damages and an additional 10% for the arrears. They claimed they are owed money that Neymar received as part of a renewal bonus when he signed a new contract in 2016. The club also requested PSG to take on the responsibility for the payment of the fees if the player cannot do so himself.<sup>[136]</sup> Neymar's lawyers announced that they would contest the case.<sup>[137]</sup>

### 2017–18: Debut season and domestic treble

Neymar made his debut for *Les Rouge-et-Bleu* on 13 August 2017, scoring a goal and assisting another in a 3–0 away victory over Guingamp.<sup>[138]</sup> Highlighting the hype around Neymar's arrival in Paris, the match was broadcast in 183 countries.<sup>[139]</sup> After the match, Neymar said, "People think that leaving Barca is to die, but it's the opposite [...] I'm more alive than ever."<sup>[140]</sup>

He added two more goals to his tally in the next Ligue 1 fixture against Toulouse.<sup>[141]</sup> Forming a prolific attacking trio alongside teenage French prodigy Kylian Mbappé and Uruguayan striker Edinson Cavani, Neymar scored one each in PSG's two opening games of the 2017–18 UEFA Champions League group stage, with the team winning 5–0 at Celtic and 3–0 at home over Bayern Munich respectively.<sup>[142][143]</sup> Neymar finished in third place in the 2017 Ballon d'Or and in the same year was ranked the third-best footballer in the world by *The Guardian*, both times behind Messi and Ronaldo.<sup>[144]</sup>

During a 3–0 defeat of rivals Marseille on 25 February 2018, Neymar fractured the fifth metatarsal bone in his right foot. He travelled to Belo Horizonte and underwent a successful operation on his foot.<sup>[145]</sup> Despite failing to make another appearance for PSG while recovering from the injury, Neymar consequently ended his first season in Paris with 28 goals in 30 matches, including 6 goals in 7 Champions League matches.<sup>[146]</sup> A testament to the success of his debut season, Neymar was awarded the Ligue 1 Player of the Year.<sup>[147]</sup>

Neymar was rushed back to play for Brazil at the 2018 World Cup in Russia following the injury in February, but his playing style was not quite the same as he appeared to be avoiding physical contact entirely rather than simply trying to draw fouls.<sup>[132]</sup>



## 2018–19: Injury and league title



Neymar during a Champions League pre-match warm up in 2018–19

On 12 August 2018, Neymar scored PSG's opening league goal of the 2018–19 season in a 3–0 win over Caen at Parc des Princes.<sup>[148]</sup> Neymar scored from a penalty in his next game as PSG won 3–1 against Guingamp in Ligue 1.<sup>[149]</sup> In the following league game, the front three of Neymar, Mbappé and Cavani all scored in a 3–1 win over Angers at home, with Neymar scoring from Mbappé's cut back and setting up Cavani to score the opener.<sup>[150]</sup>

On 3 October, Neymar scored a hattrick in a 6–1 win over Red Star Belgrade in a Champions League group stage fixture.<sup>[151]</sup> He suffered a foot injury in late January 2019 that kept him out of his side's Champions League round of 16 tie against Manchester United.<sup>[152]</sup> After United

eliminated PSG, Neymar went on Instagram insulting video review officials for awarding a stoppage-time penalty to United; UEFA banned Neymar for three matches for the insult.<sup>[153]</sup>

Neymar playing for PSG against Lille in February 2018. He was named Ligue 1 Player of the Year in his debut season.

On 27 April, Neymar scored in the 2019 Coupe de France Final against Rennes, but Rennes made a comeback and won on penalties. After the match, Neymar was caught on video appearing to punch a spectator in the face.<sup>[154]</sup> The spectator had been filming and insulting PSG players. PSG said they supported Neymar "100 percent" over the incident.<sup>[153]</sup> Neymar admitted he was wrong, but argued that neither he nor anyone else could have stayed indifferent. PSG coach Thomas Tuchel responded: "It's not easy to climb the stairs after a defeat. If we lose, we must show respect. You can't come into conflict with a spectator."<sup>[154]</sup>

## Potential return to Barcelona

In July 2019, Neymar was absent from training with PSG, with the club talking disciplinary action.<sup>[155]</sup> Neymar wanted to leave PSG as he felt referees never protected him, there was jealousy towards him from some dressing room team-mates, fans did not appreciate his talent showcased in PSG and sections of the French media were against him.<sup>[156]</sup>

According to *Sky Sports News*, Neymar was prepared to pay €20m of his own money to PSG in five instalments to facilitate a move to Barcelona. On 27 August 2019, both clubs met to discuss Neymar's situation, but according to PSG sporting director Leonardo, Barcelona's only written offer came during the meeting, which was not enough and PSG refused.<sup>[156]</sup> Three days later, on 30 August, an offer was made in writing from Neymar to PSG general manager Jean-Claude Blanc. Neymar's offer was dismissed by PSG because of French football federation regulations,<sup>[156]</sup> and he ultimately agreed to stay at PSG after the talks to return to Barcelona broke down.<sup>[157]</sup> *Sky Sports News* also reported that Real Madrid were interested in signing Neymar throughout the transfer window.<sup>[157]</sup>

## 2019–20: PSG's first Champions League final



Neymar taking a penalty against Lille during a Ligue 1 match in 2020

in the shoot-out.<sup>[164]</sup>

Neymar made his first appearance for PSG in the 2019–20 season on 14 September, in a 1–0 victory over Strasbourg in Ligue 1. He scored the winning goal in injury time in the second half from a bicycle kick.<sup>[158]</sup> One week later, he again scored a late winner, as PSG defeated Lyon 1–0 at the Parc Olympique Lyonnais.<sup>[159]</sup> Neymar suffered a hamstring injury in October while on international duty with Brazil,<sup>[160]</sup> and returned to play for PSG during their Champions League group match against Real Madrid on 26 November in a 2–2 draw.

Neymar won his third league title after PSG were awarded Ligue 1 as the season finished early due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>[161]</sup> In his first 50 matches in Ligue 1, Neymar scored 46 goals, being the first player to do so since Marseille's Gunnar Andersson in the early 1950s.<sup>[162]</sup> On 24 July 2020, in PSG's first professional game back after the pandemic, Neymar scored his side's lone goal in a 1–0 win over Saint-Étienne in the Coupe de France Final, winning his second Coupe de France title with the club.<sup>[163]</sup> On 31 July, PSG won the 2020 Coupe de la Ligue Final 6–5 on penalties over Lyon, following a 0–0 draw after extra time, which saw the side complete a domestic treble, with Neymar netting one of the penalties

In the Champions League quarter-final against Atalanta on 12 August, Neymar assisted the equalising goal in injury time in an eventual 2–1 win.<sup>[165]</sup> As a result of his performance in the match, the BBC published an article the following day titled 'Neymar: Is he now the best player in the world?'.<sup>[166]</sup> In the semi-final against RB Leipzig, he assisted one goal in a 3–0 victory, which saw PSG reach the Champions League final for the first time in their history.<sup>[167]</sup> Marca were also praiseful of Neymar, considering him the most decisive and the best player in the world following his "masterclass" performances leading up to the final.<sup>[168]</sup> PSG eventually lost out 1–0 to Bayern Munich on 23 August.<sup>[169]</sup> With his focal ambition of being the talisman to PSG winning its first ever Champions League title, Neymar was distraught and had to be consoled by the club's sporting director Leonardo.<sup>[170]</sup>

## 2020–21: Contract extension

Neymar missed out on the first match of the 2020–21 season because he had tested positive for COVID-19 a week earlier;<sup>[171]</sup> PSG went on to lose the game against Lens 1–0.<sup>[172]</sup> However, he returned to training before the match against Marseille on 13 September.<sup>[173]</sup> PSG lost Le Classique for the first time since 2011 as OM were victorious 1–0 in a match that had 14 yellow cards and five red cards handed out by the referee, including one of each to Neymar.<sup>[174]</sup>

Neymar scored his first two goals of the season in a 6–1 win against Angers on 2 October.<sup>[175]</sup> He entered the list of the top ten goal scorers in PSG history by doing so, scoring his 72nd for the club, which put him level with Raí.<sup>[176]</sup> On 28 October, Neymar suffered an adductor injury in a match against İstanbul Başakşehir, leaving the pitch after 26 minutes of play.<sup>[177]</sup> He made his return to action as a substitute in a 3–2 loss against Monaco on 20 November,<sup>[178]</sup> and scored his first goal after recovering from his injury in a 1–0 win against RB Leipzig in the UEFA Champions League on 24 November.<sup>[179]</sup>

On 28 November, Neymar scored his 50th goal in Ligue 1, converting a penalty in PSG's 2–2 draw against Bordeaux. This made him the fastest player in the club's history to reach this, doing so in only 58 matches.<sup>[180]</sup> Four days later, on 2 December, he scored two goals in a 3–1 Champions League victory against Manchester United at Old Trafford.<sup>[181]</sup> In PSG's final group match, Neymar scored his third career Champions League hat-trick against İstanbul Başakşehir, as his side won 5–1 and qualified for the knockout stage as group winners.<sup>[182]</sup> He became the first player in European Cup and Champions League history to score 20 goals for two different clubs, scoring 21 goals for Barcelona in 40 games, and 20 for PSG in 25 games.<sup>[183]</sup> In a 1–0 loss to Lyon on 13 December, Neymar suffered an ankle injury after a tackle from Thiago Mendes, and had to be stretchered off the field.<sup>[184]</sup> He avoided a fracture, but was ruled out of action for three weeks with a sprain.<sup>[185]</sup> His return proved to be exactly one month after his injury, on 13 January 2021, in a 2–1 win over rivals Marseille in the Trophée des Champions, with Neymar scoring the winning goal from a penalty.<sup>[186]</sup> He sustained a left adductor injury in a 1–0 cup win over Caen on 10 February, ruling him out for four weeks.<sup>[187]</sup> On 21 March, he was back in action, coming on as a substitute in a 4–2 league win against Lyon.<sup>[188]</sup>

In the 2020–21 UEFA Champions League, PSG were eliminated by Manchester City in the semi-finals. Neymar was absent for PSG's defeat of Barcelona, but he was present in both matches of the quarter-finals against Bayern Munich and both semi-final confrontations against Man City. On 8 May, he extended his contract with PSG until 2025.<sup>[189]</sup>

## 2021–22: Record-breaking Ligue 1 title and injuries

On 10 August 2021, Neymar's former Barcelona teammate Lionel Messi signed for PSG.<sup>[190]</sup> On 29 August, Neymar made his first appearance of the season, being a starter in a 2–0 win over Reims. Messi replaced Neymar at 66th minute of the match, making his debut for the French club.<sup>[191]</sup> Neymar scored his first goal of the 2021–22 season on 19 September, converting a penalty in a 2–1 win over Lyon.<sup>[192]</sup> He scored his 400th career goal on 6 November against Bordeaux, where he scored a brace and helped the team to win the match 3–2.<sup>[193]</sup>

On 28 November, Neymar suffered an ankle injury in a 3–1 win over Saint-Étienne. He was taken off on a stretcher at the 85th minute of the match.<sup>[194]</sup> His return from injury came on 15 February 2022 in a Champions League match against Real Madrid, where he came on as a substitute and assisted Mbappé's injury-time goal to win the match 1–0.<sup>[195]</sup> Four days later, he made his return to league play and his first start in 2022 in a match against Nantes; he scored a goal and missed a penalty in a 3–1 loss at the Stade de la Beaujoire.<sup>[196]</sup> On 13 March, following their Champions League elimination against Real Madrid in the round of 16, Neymar and his team-mate Messi were booed by some of the PSG fans at the Parc des Princes in the league match against Bordeaux.<sup>[197][198]</sup> On 21 May, he scored his 100th goal with PSG in a 5–0 win over Metz.<sup>[199]</sup> Neymar helped PSG win their record-tying 10th national championship, finishing the season with 13 goals and 8 assists across all competitions, registering the fewest goals scored since arriving in Europe in 2013, in a season marked by various injuries and collective irregularity.<sup>[200]</sup>



Neymar (right) with Kylian Mbappé and Lionel Messi against Marseille during Le Classique, October 2021

## 2022–23: Final season at PSG



Neymar (middle) celebrating a goal with PSG team-mates Messi and Mbappé

Neymar's form in the first half of the season led him to be touted to win the 2023 Ballon d'Or, alongside the likes of Erling Haaland and Mbappé.<sup>[208]</sup>

Following a disappointing form in the previous season and with the club's change in transfer policy, Neymar was linked with a potential departure from the club, but the lack of potential suitors broke down a potential move, despite PSG's Football Advisor Luis Campos dismissing those rumours – stating that Neymar was part of the club's project.<sup>[201]</sup> He quickly regained his form from his previous season, starting off the season by scoring a goal and providing a hat-trick of assists in a 5–0 win against Clermont on 6 August.<sup>[201][202]</sup> As part of his prolific attacking trio alongside Kylian Mbappé and Lionel Messi, on 21 August, all three scored and assisted with Neymar netting twice and registering three more assists in PSG's 7–1 away win over Lille.<sup>[203][204]</sup>

After registering 13 goal contributions in his first five league games, Neymar was named Ligue 1's Player of the Month in August.<sup>[201][205]</sup> By early October 2022, Neymar was considered one of the stand-out players in Europe and back to his best form, having scored 11 goals and providing 9 assists in just 13 games.<sup>[206]</sup> Manager Christophe Galtier praised Neymar for playing his best ever football in PSG.<sup>[207]</sup>

On 6 March 2023, PSG announced that Neymar would undergo surgery in Doha and would be ruled out for the remainder of the season.<sup>[209]</sup> This led to Neymar missing PSG's second leg of their Champions League round of 16 tie against Bayern Munich, in which PSG ended up being eliminated. After reports that Messi would leave the club following the expiration of his contract, a group of PSG supporters gathered outside the club's headquarters, protesting against the club's direction and insulting various figures of the club, including Neymar. Another group of individuals went to Neymar's house, demanding him to leave the club.<sup>[210][211]</sup>

### August 2023: Departure

Despite being PSG's fourth-highest scorer and winning ten trophies, including five Ligue 1 titles, Neymar's tenure at PSG was marred by injuries and unfulfilled expectations, most notably not helping PSG win a Champions League. He missed 119 matches for PSG in total as a result of being injured around 20 times across his six-year spell, showing a fragility that was not seen either at Barcelona or Santos.<sup>[213]</sup> James Westwood of *Goal* wrote that Neymar wasted the best years of his career and that in 2017 he had "the world at his feet" playing for Barcelona, throwing away his chance to join Pelé and Messi as a "true legend of the game" by joining PSG.<sup>[132]</sup> Regardless, Neymar has been credited as a legend of PSG, trailing only Ibrahimović, Cavani and Mbappé in the club's top scorers at the time of his departure.<sup>[140]</sup>

At the end of the 2022–23 season, PSG began a squad overhaul and after not renewing the contracts of Sergio Ramos and Lionel Messi, following the arrival of Luis Enrique as the club's new manager, Neymar and Marco Verratti were informed that they would not be in the team's plans for the following season.<sup>[214]</sup> Shortly after, Neymar was linked with a potential return to Barcelona. However, Barcelona's hierarchy never reached an advanced stage to discuss finer economic details and possibilities, as the club's manager Xavi was not keen on signing him, leading both clubs to fail to reach an agreement.<sup>[215]</sup> Other top clubs also distanced themselves from signing Neymar.<sup>[132]</sup>

"It is naturally difficult to say goodbye to a legend of the club, which Neymar will always be. I will never forget the day he arrived at PSG, nor what he brought to the club and to our project over the course of these six years. We have lived through extraordinary times and Neymar will always be a part of our history. I want to thank him, as well as his family. We wish Neymar the best for the future and for his next adventure."

— PSG's President Nasser Al-Khelaifi on Neymar's departure from Paris Saint-Germain.<sup>[212]</sup>

### Al Hilal

On 15 August 2023, Neymar completed a transfer to Saudi Pro League club Al Hilal on a two-year contract.<sup>[216][217]</sup> The transfer fee was reported to be worth €90 million, making him the most expensive purchase in the Saudi Pro League.<sup>[217]</sup> He is also reportedly being paid €150m a year at Al Hilal, six times the amount he earned at PSG.<sup>[218]</sup>

According to *The Independent*, Barcelona were the only European club who showed genuine interest in signing Neymar; others top clubs turned away primarily due to his high salary and the expected transfer fee to sign him.<sup>[219]</sup> Various media outlets dubbed Neymar as the 'Prince who never became King' due to leaving Europe without a Ballon d'Or and no additional Champions League titles after the 2015 win with Barcelona.<sup>[220][221]</sup>



Neymar celebrating his first goal with Al Hilal in 2023

In light of the fellow star players joining the league, including Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema, Neymar declared, "I wouldn't be surprised if the Saudi league is better than the French."<sup>[222]</sup> His transfer to Al Hilal drew comparisons to former Brazil international Rivellino's move to the club in 1978.<sup>[222]</sup> On 15 September, he made his debut in a 6–1 thrashing of Al-Riyadh, coming off the bench and providing an assist to a goal by Malcom.<sup>[223]</sup> On 3 October, Neymar scored his first goal for the club in a 3–0 away win against Nassaji Mazandaran in an AFC Champions League group stage match.<sup>[224]</sup> Having played five games for his new club, Neymar ruptured his anterior cruciate ligament while on international duty in October 2023.<sup>[225]</sup> In January 2024, Al Hilal deregistered Neymar from their roster as a result of his season ending injury, in order to free up one of the eight foreign roster spots for Renan Lodi.<sup>[226]</sup>

### International career

#### 2010–2012: Senior debut and first major tournaments



Neymar at a press conference for Brazil in August 2010. He made his senior debut that month aged 18.

Following Neymar's performances for Santos in their successful early 2010 season, including winning the 2010 Copa do Brasil, in which he was the top goalscorer, and the 2010 Campeonato Paulista, in which he scored 14 goals, former Brazilian football players Pelé and Romário reportedly urged coach Dunga to take Neymar to the 2010 World Cup.<sup>[33]</sup> Although the opinion that Neymar deserved a place in Dunga's squad went as far as a 14,000 signature petition,<sup>[33][227]</sup> and despite the pressure on Dunga to pick Neymar,<sup>[228]</sup> he was omitted from both the squad of 23,<sup>[229][230]</sup> and the stand-by list.<sup>[231]</sup> Although Dunga described Neymar as "extremely talented", he said that the 18-year-old had not been tested sufficiently on the international level to earn a World Cup spot and he had failed to impress enough while on international duty.<sup>[232]</sup>

On 26 July 2010, Neymar was selected for the first time in the Brazil senior team by new head coach Mano Menezes for a friendly match against the United States to be played in East Rutherford, New Jersey. On 10 August 2010 he made his debut with the national team in that game, aged 18 years old, starting the match and wearing the number 11 jersey. He scored on his debut after 28 minutes, a header coming from an André Santos cross in a 2–0 win for Brazil.<sup>[233]</sup> On 1 March 2011, Neymar said: "Being on the Brazilian team is a privilege. There are some marvelous players and I'm very happy to be among them."<sup>[15]</sup>

On 27 March 2011, he scored twice in a 2–0 win against Scotland at the Emirates Stadium.<sup>[234]</sup> During the match against Scotland, a banana was thrown onto the pitch after he scored from the penalty spot, which led Neymar to complain about 'constant jeering and an atmosphere of racism', implying that Scottish fans exhibited racism.<sup>[235][236]</sup> While Scottish officials explained that Neymar had been booed solely for perceived injury-feigning, a German student who was in the stadium amongst Brazil supporters said that he threw the banana with no racist intentions. This led to the Scottish Football Association asking the Brazilian Football Confederation for an apology for the accusations made to the Scottish fans.<sup>[237][238]</sup> Neymar refused to apologise or retract his words, claiming he "did not accuse any person or any group of supporters".<sup>[239][240]</sup>



Neymar celebrates his goal for Brazil against Scotland, on 27 March 2011, with André Santos and Ramires.

Neymar was the leading goal scorer of the 2011 South American Youth Championship with nine goals, including two in the final, in Brazil's 6–0 win against Uruguay.<sup>[241]</sup> He also took part at the 2011 Copa América in Argentina, where he scored two goals in the first-round game against Ecuador. He was selected 'Man of the Match' in Brazil's first match against Venezuela, which ended a 1–1 draw. Brazil were eliminated in the quarter-finals in a penalty shoot-out against Paraguay (2–2 a.e.t.), with Neymar being substituted in the 80th minute.<sup>[242]</sup>

On 11 May 2012, Neymar was selected for the squad of the Brazil Olympic football team to participate in the London 2012 Olympic Games.<sup>[243]</sup> In Brazil's first warm-up match on 20 July 2012, against the host nation Great Britain at Riverside Stadium, Neymar was involved in both goals of a 2–0 win, first making an assist with a free-kick into the six-yard box for Sandro's header, before converting a penalty.<sup>[244]</sup> On 26 July, he scored his first goal in Brazil's opening fixture against Egypt, which ended a 3–2 victory for Brazil.<sup>[245]</sup> In the following match against Belarus at Old Trafford in Manchester, Neymar scored a free-kick from 25-yards into the top-right corner of the goal and set up goals for Alexandre Pato's header with a cross from the right and Oscar with a back heel as Brazil secured their place in the quarter-finals with a 3–1 win. Afterwards he said: "I scored and made two assists so for me it was perfect".<sup>[246][247]</sup>



Neymar preparing to take a free-kick from 30 yards out against Belarus at Old Trafford in Manchester during the 2012 Summer Olympics

On 5 August 2012, in the quarter-final encounter against Honduras, Neymar scored a penalty, his third goal of the tournament and assisted in Leandro Damião's second goal on the match, to help Brazil to a 3–2 victory at St James' Park and book a place in the semi-finals.<sup>[248]</sup> On 11 August, Brazil lost 2–1 to Mexico in the final at Wembley Stadium in London.<sup>[249]</sup>

Neymar scored his first full international hat-trick on 10 September 2012, in an 8–0 win over China at the Estádio José do Rego Maciel in Recife.<sup>[250]</sup> On 19 September, Neymar scored the winner against Argentina in a 2–1 win in the first leg of the 2012 Superclásico de las Américas at the Estádio Serra Dourada in Goiânia, Brazil.<sup>[251]</sup>

## 2013–2014: Confederations Cup triumph and World Cup breakthrough

Neymar was selected as part of Luiz Felipe Scolari's Brazil squad for the 2013 Confederations Cup on home soil. For the tournament he was assigned the number 10 shirt, having previously worn 11.<sup>[252]</sup>



Neymar playing against Spain's Gerard Piqué in the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup Final

Neymar scored the first goal of the tournament in a 3–0 win over Japan at the Estádio Nacional Mané Garrincha on 15 June.<sup>[253]</sup> In their second match, Neymar scored after nine minutes and crossed for Jô's late goal to give Brazil a 2–0 win over Mexico.<sup>[254]</sup> He scored in his third consecutive match, with a powerful free kick from the edge of the penalty area, as Brazil beat Italy 4–2, and received his third consecutive man-of-the-match award.<sup>[255][256]</sup>

On 30 June, Neymar was involved in Fred's opening goal and then subsequently scored Brazil's second in the 3–0 final victory over Spain.<sup>[257]</sup> Neymar's performances saw him receive the Golden Ball for player of the tournament.<sup>[258]</sup>

On 5 March 2014, Neymar scored a hat-trick in a friendly win against South Africa in Johannesburg. He made headlines for his conduct after the final whistle when a South African boy ran onto the pitch. As security staff began to escort the boy from the field, Neymar intervened and introduced him to his Brazil teammates before they lifted him in the air during their celebrations.<sup>[259][260]</sup>

On 2 June, Neymar was named in the Brazil squad for the 2014 FIFA World Cup.<sup>[261]</sup> Going into the tournament, as the team's star player Neymar was expected to lead Brazil to their sixth World Cup success, and first title on home soil.<sup>[262]</sup> One week prior to the team's opening match, Neymar scored once and made two assists in a 4–0 friendly win over Panama.<sup>[263]</sup>

Neymar earned his 50th international cap in the opening match of the tournament, on 12 June against Croatia in São Paulo. In the 26th minute, with Croatia leading 1–0, Neymar elbowed Croatian midfielder Luka Modrić, after which Neymar was issued a yellow card.<sup>[264]</sup> Many critics agreed that Neymar's punishment was too lenient and that he should have been issued a red card.<sup>[265][266][267]</sup> He equalised before half-time with a shot from outside the box and gave Brazil the lead in the second half with a penalty kick, following a controversial decision by the referee, in an eventual 3–1 win.<sup>[268]</sup> In the third group match, he again scored twice as the Seleção defeated Cameroon 4–1 to reach the knockout stage.<sup>[269]</sup> In the round of 16 against Chile, the match finished 1–1 after 120 minutes and was decided by a penalty shoot-out with Neymar scoring what proved to be the winning kick for Brazil.<sup>[270]</sup>

In the quarter-final win over Colombia, while challenging for the ball, Neymar was kneed in the back by Juan Camilo Zúñiga and had to be removed from the pitch on a stretcher. A hospital scan revealed that Neymar had suffered a fractured vertebra in his spine and he missed the rest of the World Cup.<sup>[271]</sup> Earlier in the match, Neymar assisted Thiago Silva's opening goal with a cross from a corner kick.<sup>[272]</sup> It was the second

Neymar assist from a corner in the tournament, after creating David Luiz's goal in the previous round against Chile.<sup>[270]</sup> Without their injured talisman Neymar (and the suspended captain Thiago Silva), Brazil would ultimately lose in the semi-final in a stunning 7–1 defeat to eventual champion Germany on 8 July.<sup>[273]</sup>

On 11 July, Neymar was named on the 10-man shortlist for FIFA's Golden Ball award for the tournament's best player.<sup>[274]</sup> He won the Bronze Boot as the tournament's third top goalscorer and was named in the World Cup All Star XI.<sup>[275]</sup>

## 2015–2016: Assuming the captaincy and Olympic gold

With captain Thiago Silva ruled out through injury, new coach Dunga decided to make Neymar captain and confirmed on 5 September that the forward would stay on as skipper on a permanent basis.<sup>[276]</sup> On 14 October 2014, Neymar scored four goals in one game for the first time in his international career, scoring all of Brazil's goals in 4–0 friendly win against Japan at the National Stadium, Singapore.<sup>[277]</sup> At the age of just 22 years, Neymar had scored 40 goals in 58 internationals, and had become the fifth highest goalscorer for his national team.<sup>[277][278]</sup> On 26 March 2015, Neymar scored Brazil's second goal in a 3–1 friendly win over France in Paris.<sup>[279]</sup>

On 14 June 2015, in Brazil's opening Copa América fixture, Neymar scored the equaliser and assisted the stoppage-time winning goal by Douglas Costa as Brazil came from 0–1 down to beat Peru 2–1 in Temuco.<sup>[280]</sup> After Brazil's second match, a 0–1 loss to Colombia in Santiago, Neymar was booked for handball, resulting in a suspension. After the final whistle, he was red carded for deliberately kicking the ball at Pablo Armero, and as a result was pushed over by Colombian striker Carlos Bacca, who was also dismissed.<sup>[281]</sup> CONMEBOL issued Neymar with a four-match ban, ruling him out for the remainder of the tournament, in addition to a \$10,000 fine.<sup>[282]</sup>

The CBF had wanted Neymar to play at the Copa América Centenario and the Olympics in Rio during the summer of 2016, but after a request from Barcelona manager Luis Enrique, he was rested from the first tournament.<sup>[283]</sup> In late June 2016, he was subsequently one of the three over-23 players to be included in Brazil's squad for the 2016 Summer Olympics on home soil, and was named the team's captain by the Olympic side's manager Rogério Micale.<sup>[284][285]</sup>

In Brazil's quarter-final clash with Colombia on 13 August, Neymar scored Brazil's first goal of the match, from a direct free kick, and also set up his nation's second goal in an eventual 2–0 win.<sup>[286]</sup> In Brazil's semi-final clash with Honduras on 18 August, Neymar scored twice, Brazil's first and last goals of the match, in a 6–0 win.<sup>[287]</sup>

In the final against Germany at the Maracanã in Rio on 20 August, Neymar opened the scoring with a free-kick after 27 minutes. The game finished 1–1 after Max Meyer equalised in the second-half. Brazil beat Germany 5–4 on penalties, and Neymar scored the winning penalty to bring Brazil its first Olympic gold medal in men's football.<sup>[288][289]</sup> Both during and prior to the tournament, he had been subjected to criticism over his conduct on and off the pitch, with several former Brazil players suggesting that he was not fit to captain the national team.<sup>[290]</sup> Neymar subsequently renounced the captaincy following their Olympic victory.<sup>[291]</sup>

## 2018: World Cup

In May 2018, Neymar was named in Tite's final 23-man squad for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.<sup>[292]</sup> On 3 June 2018, he made his international comeback after a three-month absence from a foot injury and scored a goal in a 2–0 win over Croatia in a friendly match at Anfield.<sup>[293]</sup> The following week, he became Brazil's joint-third highest goalscorer alongside Romário when he scored his 55th international goal in a 3–0 friendly win over Austria.<sup>[294]</sup> In Brazil's second World Cup match, played against Costa Rica at the Krestovsky Stadium, Saint Petersburg, on 22 June, Neymar scored the team's second goal in injury time as Brazil won 2–0.<sup>[295]</sup> The goal, his 56th for Brazil, took him third in the all-time scoring chart behind only Pelé and Ronaldo.<sup>[296]</sup>

On 2 July, Neymar scored his second goal of the World Cup in a 2–0 win over Mexico in the last 16, while also assisting Roberto Firmino for his goal.<sup>[297]</sup> After the Mexico game, BBC Sport wrote that despite Neymar's "good performances" coming up top in several statistics at the World Cup, "there is still a sense that he remains widely unpopular among neutrals" due to his "petulance and the play-acting". Meanwhile, Brazilian newspaper O Globo wrote that "Neymar has charmed Brazil, but annoyed the whole world".<sup>[298]</sup> On 6 July, Brazil were eliminated after losing 2–1 against Belgium in the quarter-finals, with Neymar denied an injury time equaliser by a finger-tip save from Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.<sup>[299]</sup>

## 2019–2021: Copa América runner-up

In May 2019, Neymar was included in Brazil's 23-man squad for the 2019 Copa América on home soil.<sup>[300]</sup> On 5 June, however, he suffered an ankle injury in a 2–0 friendly win over Qatar and was ruled out of the tournament, with Neymar expected to miss four weeks due to the injury.<sup>[301][302]</sup>



Neymar prepares to take a free kick during Brazil's opening match of the 2014 FIFA World Cup against Croatia.



Neymar evading a tackle against Mexico at the 2014 World Cup.



Neymar preparing to strike the winning penalty kick for Brazil against Germany in the Olympic final.



Neymar celebrates scoring against Costa Rica at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

On 10 October 2019, Neymar played his 100th match for Brazil in a friendly draw 1–1 with Senegal in Singapore.<sup>[303]</sup> On 13 October 2020, he scored a hat-trick in a 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifier against Peru, which Brazil won 4–2. He reached his 64th international goal and surpassed Ronaldo as the nation's second highest goalscorer of all time.<sup>[304]</sup>

On 13 June 2021, in Brazil's opening group match of the 2021 Copa América, which took place on home soil, Neymar scored his team's second goal from the penalty spot and later assisted another for Gabriel Barbosa in a 3–0 win over Venezuela.<sup>[305]</sup> In the following match on 17 June, he once again scored the second goal in an eventual 4–0 win over Peru.<sup>[306]</sup> On 23 June he assisted Casemiro's match-winning goal from a corner in injury time of a 2–1 win over Colombia.<sup>[307]</sup> On 2 July, he assisted Lucas Paquetá's goal in a 1–0 win over Chile in the quarter-finals of the competition.<sup>[308]</sup> Three days later, he once again assisted Paquetá for the only goal of the match in the semi-finals against Peru.<sup>[309]</sup> On 10 July, Brazil were defeated 1–0 by Argentina in the final.<sup>[310]</sup> Despite the loss, Neymar was named the player of the tournament alongside Argentina's Messi for his performances throughout the competition.<sup>[311]</sup>

On 9 September 2021, Neymar scored the second goal in a 2–0 win over Peru and became Brazil's all-time top scorer in FIFA World Cup qualification matches, with 12 in total.<sup>[312]</sup>

## 2022–present: World Cup and all-time Brazil top scorer

'Keep inspiring us. I will keep punching the air with joy for every goal you score'

— Pelé congratulates Neymar on equalling his record of 77 official international goals.<sup>[313]</sup>

penalty.<sup>[317][319]</sup>

On 7 November 2022, Neymar was named in the Brazil squad for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.<sup>[314]</sup> He played 79 minutes of Brazil's first match on 24 November, a 2–0 win against Serbia, but was unable to play the next two group games due to ankle ligament damage.<sup>[315]</sup> Neymar recovered from his injury to play against South Korea in the last 16 on 5 December, where he assisted Vinícius Júnior's opening goal and scored a penalty in a 4–1 win for Brazil;<sup>[316]</sup> as a result, he became only the third Brazilian player ever, after Pelé and Ronaldo, to score in three different World Cups.<sup>[317]</sup> Four days later, in the quarter-final match against Croatia, Neymar scored his 77th international goal and equalled Pelé's official goal tally for the national team, a goal which journalist Michael Cox described as one of the "greatest individual goals in football history".<sup>[318]</sup> Brazil, however, were defeated 4–2 in the ensuing penalty shootout following a 1–1 draw after extra time, before Neymar was able to take Brazil's final

penalty.<sup>[317][319]</sup>

On 8 September 2023, Neymar scored twice for Brazil in a 5–1 win over Bolivia in their opening match for 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification. His 78th and 79th goals in his 125th appearance for Brazil, Neymar became the national team's top goalscorer ahead of Pelé.<sup>[320][321]</sup> Mimicking Pelé's punch in the air goal celebration with the first of his two goals, Neymar stated after the game that he never imagined he would reach the record.<sup>[321][322]</sup> On 17 October, in Brazil's 2–0 qualifying defeat to Uruguay, Neymar was taken off in tears on a stretcher at the end of the first half, following an awkward landing after a challenge. Neymar would confirm later that week that he had ruptured his ACL and meniscus completely in his left knee and would need to undergo surgery, likely ruling him out for the remainder of the 2023–24 campaign.<sup>[225]</sup>

## Player profile

### Style of play and reception



Neymar (right) greets future teammate Lionel Messi after the 2011 FIFA Club World Cup Final. As a teenager, Neymar was inspired by Messi.<sup>[323]</sup>

Neymar primarily plays as either a central striker, second striker, winger or occasionally as an attacking midfielder, and has been described as "a true phenomenon".<sup>[324][325]</sup> Highlighting both his prolific scoring and playmaking abilities, he stands as PSG's fourth-highest-goalscorer of all time and fifth-highest-assister of all time.<sup>[326]</sup> He often plays as a left sided forward for both club and country in the team's 4–3–3 formation, drifting infield, due to his energetic pace and playmaking skills; this position allows him to shoot with his stronger foot, or create chances for teammates.<sup>[325]</sup>

According to Westwood of Goal,

"[Neymar] is a master dribbler, and he sees openings that other players don't. He can create chances out of nothing and more often than not, has the finishing touch or decisive final pass to match his ingenuity on the ball."<sup>[132]</sup>

Neymar's dribbling skills, tricks and playmaking ability have been described as reminiscent of compatriot Ronaldinho. His main traits are his creativity, vision, passing, finishing, dribbling, feints, touch, and technique, being described as both "electric" and "explosive".<sup>[327][328][329]</sup> He is a notable exponent of the rainbow flick.<sup>[330]</sup> A prolific goalscorer,<sup>[331]</sup> although naturally right-footed, he is capable of scoring with both feet, as well as with his head, and is an accurate free-kick and penalty taker.<sup>[325][332]</sup> Neymar stated: "I'm always trying to perfect everything – dribbling, shooting, headers and control. You can always improve".<sup>[15]</sup> He has been inspired by Ronaldinho, Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Andrés Iniesta, Xavi and Wayne Rooney.<sup>[333][334]</sup> Neymar cites Kyle Walker as the toughest opponent he has ever faced.<sup>[335]</sup>

Considered to be a highly promising player in his youth,<sup>[336]</sup> Brazilian playmaker Ronaldinho had also tipped Neymar on becoming the best player in the world, stating in 2013: "Neymar is young though, and I can't explain how special he will become. In the next two or three seasons he will become the best player."<sup>[337]</sup> Another Brazilian star, retired World Cup winner Ronaldo also believed that Neymar could become the best in the world, commenting: "Logically, Messi is better right now but Neymar is a great talent who will show the world that he will be number one".<sup>[338]</sup> Former Real Madrid sporting director Jorge Valdano has also praised Neymar, stating: "I like Neymar a lot. Many of his individual

actions result in a goal and often it's a move that only seems to be happening with him on the pitch."<sup>[339]</sup> After joining Barcelona, Neymar consequently established himself as one of the best players in world football, generally being considered the third-best player in the world behind Messi and Ronaldo.<sup>[340][341][342]</sup> In the years since, Neymar is also widely reputed as the best Brazilian player of his generation.<sup>[343][344]</sup>

"And so, circus Neymar arrived in Dortmund. The Brazilian's moods, histrionics, petulance, and goalscoring prowess were on view in every fascinating and exasperating detail."

—*Forbes* on some of the traits associated with Neymar following a Champions League game for PSG against Borussia Dortmund, February 2020.<sup>[345]</sup>

pitch and promised to change for the better.<sup>[356]</sup>



Neymar, playing for Brazil at the [2016 Summer Olympics](#), has been compared to compatriots [Pelé](#) and [Ronaldinho](#).

However, Neymar also has been known and criticised for his excessive [diving](#)<sup>[346][347][348][349]</sup> when tackled by another player for which Pelé has said, "[h]e is a player with a body that can't take a lot of hits. [...] A lot of times he will fall because he can't do anything else, but he was overdoing it." He continued: "Even when he is fouled, he can't make a spectacle out of it".<sup>[350]</sup> During the 2018 World Cup, Neymar's antics inspired on social media the Neymar Challenge for dramatic dives.<sup>[351][352]</sup> As the star player for Brazil (and PSG) he is often the most targeted player on the field; he was the most fouled player in Europe's top leagues in 2018.<sup>[353]</sup> A divisive figure in the sport, he has been accused of exaggerating injury, with [Eric Cantona](#) stating Neymar is a "great actor", comparing him to a wheeled suitcase: "you barely touch it, and it turns round and round for hours."<sup>[354][355]</sup> In response to the criticism over his petulance and histrionics, Neymar starred in a post 2018 World Cup commercial where he admitted to not being able to deal with his frustrations which contributed to theatrics while on the

## Expectations

Despite being the all-time topscorer for Brazil and having a longstanding reputation as one of the world's best players, Neymar is considered to have not fulfilled the expectations of him set at the beginning of his career: winning the Ballon d'Or and leading Brazil to a World Cup title.<sup>[358]</sup> According to *Sports Illustrated*, Neymar could end his career as the most gifted player to never win a Ballon d'Or or World Cup.<sup>[359]</sup> Neymar finished in third place in the 2015 and 2017 editions of the Ballon d'Or, both times behind [Messi](#) and [Ronaldo](#).

At PSG, Neymar was also expected to lead them to their first ever Champions League title; the club lost to Bayern Munich in the 2020 final.<sup>[358]</sup> During his six-year tenure at the club, he struggled with frequent injuries which hindered his playing time and his explosiveness. The injuries may have contributed to him not achieving more in his prime years, as he cumulatively missed 119 matches<sup>[213]</sup> and played over 30 matches in all competitions just once in Paris (31 in 2020–21).<sup>[360][361]</sup> In 2023, Spanish publication *Marca* wrote that "Neymar's star is dimming due to a seemingly endless string of injuries".<sup>[362]</sup>

Neymar was also often criticized for his lack of professional discipline, with his desire to party and play late-night poker games illustrating what may have been his lack of commitment to PSG. In 2018, Pelé criticised Neymar: "It's difficult to defend Neymar for all the things he does besides playing football. I've been with him in Europe twice. We talked and I explained: 'The God of football gave you the gift. What you do complicates it'."<sup>[132]</sup> In February 2023, the day after PSG lost to Bayern Munich in the first leg of the Champions League round of 16, images of Neymar in a fast-food restaurant at the end of the night surfaced on social media. Neymar defended himself, saying "It's my life, I do what I want."<sup>[213]</sup>



Neymar being unveiled by PSG in 2017. His career in the French capital was blighted by injuries and controversies.<sup>[357]</sup>

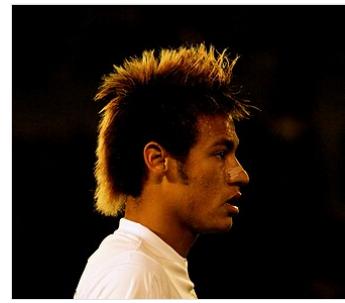
In 2023, following his relocation from Europe to Saudi Arabia at 31-years old, various media outlets dubbed Neymar as the 'Prince who never became King'.<sup>[220][221]</sup> Westwood of *Goal* owed Neymar's move to PSG from Barcelona as the reason for him not being regarded alongside the likes of Pelé and Messi as a "true legend of the game".<sup>[132]</sup> *RMC Sport* journalist Daniel Riolo said: "Do we realise that Neymar, in terms of transfer and salary, is the biggest failure in the history of football? I can't think of a bigger failure for what he cost, it's horrible."<sup>[363]</sup> On the contrary, Cox of *The Athletic* argues that Neymar deserves to be regarded as one of football's all-time greats in light of becoming Brazil's all-time topscorer.<sup>[364]</sup> Brazil coach Fernando Diniz also declared that Neymar is one of the greatest players in history.<sup>[365]</sup> During his 10-year tenure in Europe playing for Barcelona and PSG, Lawrence Ostlere of *The Independent* opinionated that Messi was the only player superior in "every facet of the game" than Neymar.<sup>[366]</sup>

## Comparisons

The media have often drawn comparisons between Neymar and Brazilian legend Pelé,<sup>[332]</sup> as Neymar possesses similar attributes and also like Pelé came from the Santos Youth Academy. In February 2013, he was on the cover of *Time* magazine with the title 'The Next Pelé'.<sup>[367]</sup> Neymar has said that Pelé is his "role model" but also said: "I don't like to make a comparison with Pelé".<sup>[368]</sup> He has also been compared to compatriot Ronaldinho.<sup>[369]</sup>

Neymar's increasing reputation led both the media and former great players to draw comparisons between Neymar and Barcelona forward Lionel Messi, which Neymar has commented on saying: "Messi is above everyone, there is no use comparing me with him. He is the best player in the world and I always get inspired when I watch good football."<sup>[370]</sup> Ronaldo stated: "Neymar is a great talent, the best we have in Brazil. He is very similar to Messi." Zico said: "I see Neymar like a [Cristiano] Ronaldo or a Messi, the type who appears and makes things happen."<sup>[371]</sup>

After his hat-trick in a 3–1 victory against Internacional in the Copa Libertadores and Messi's five goals scored in the Champions League, Neymar said: "I am a Messi fan. I was told what he did today. I support him to score a lot of nice goals so I can keep copying and imitating him."<sup>[372][373]</sup>



Neymar with a mohawk in Santos

## Image

Described as a 'hair icon' in sports by GQ Australia, Neymar's hairstyles have drawn much attention. He has a reputation for changing hairstyles frequently, usually for flamboyant styles.<sup>[374]</sup>

## Personal life



Neymar expresses his Christian faith after winning the gold medal with Brazil at the 2016 Summer Olympics.

He has a very close sibling relationship with his sister Rafaella Beckran, and honoured her by tattooing her face on his arm, while Beckran tattooed her brother's eyes on her arm.<sup>[375]</sup> Neymar is a Christian,<sup>[12][13]</sup> and follows the Pentecostal branch of the religion.<sup>[376]</sup> Neymar has spoken about his faith saying: "Life only makes sense when our highest ideal is to serve Christ!"<sup>[377]</sup> Additionally, he has sometimes worn a headband with the words "100% Jesus".<sup>[378]</sup> Neymar reportedly also tithes (10%) his income to his church and has named Kaká as his religious role model.<sup>[379]</sup> Each year, Neymar organises a charity match with fellow Brazilian footballer Nenê in Nenê's hometown of Jundiaí, with the purpose of raising food for needy families.<sup>[380]</sup> In addition to his native Portuguese, Neymar also speaks Spanish.<sup>[381][382]</sup>

In July 2019, police announced that a rape investigation against Neymar would be dropped due to insufficient evidence.<sup>[383]</sup> On 2 September 2020, it was reported that Neymar, along with PSG teammates Ángel Di María and Leandro Paredes, tested positive for COVID-19. The French sports newspaper L'Équipe said that the three players reportedly went on vacation in Ibiza. As a result, they were quarantined for one week, and the rest of the players and working staff were scheduled to take a coronavirus test within the same week.<sup>[384][385]</sup>

During a match between Paris Saint-Germain and Marseille, Neymar reported being racially abused by Álvaro González, after being sent off for hitting him in the back of the head.<sup>[387]</sup> In the aftermath, Neymar hit back on social media, as the Spanish defender denied saying any racist comments during the match.<sup>[388]</sup> On 16 September, Neymar was handed a two-match ban for his actions; Ligue 1 also began an investigation into the alleged racist comments made by Álvaro.<sup>[389]</sup> Several days before the decision made by the French league, Spanish radio station Cadena SER claimed to have footage of Neymar racially abusing OM player Hiroki Sakai.<sup>[390]</sup> On 30 September, Ligue 1 decided that both Álvaro and Neymar would receive no suspensions, because proof of their wrongdoings were insufficient.<sup>[391]</sup> Additionally, the day after the ruling, Sakai denied on social media that Neymar had made racist comments toward him.<sup>[392]</sup>

Neymar supported Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro in the 2022 Brazilian general election.<sup>[386]</sup>



Neymar and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro. He supported Bolsonaro in the 2022 Brazilian general election.<sup>[386]</sup>

## Outside football

### Wealth and sponsorships

Neymar has signed many sponsorship deals since his reputation began to grow from the age of 17. In March 2011, he signed an 11-year contract with American sportswear company Nike,<sup>[393]</sup> which ended in August 2020 after a Nike employee made a sexual assault complaint against him.<sup>[394][395]</sup> Neymar has since signed with German sportswear company Puma.<sup>[396]</sup> Still in March 2011, Panasonic paid US\$2.4 million to secure Neymar's services for two years. Prior to signing for Barcelona, France Football had ranked Neymar 13th in its list of the world's richest players in 2012, with total earnings of \$18.8 million for the previous 12 months.<sup>[397]</sup> He has also signed other sponsorships from Volkswagen, Tenys Pé Baruel, Lupo, Ambev, Claro, Unilever and Santander.<sup>[398][399][400][401]</sup>

In 2018, France Football ranked Neymar the third-highest-paid footballer in the world, earning €81.5m (\$95m) for a calendar year in combined income from salaries, bonuses and endorsements deals.<sup>[402]</sup> In 2019, Forbes ranked Neymar the world's third-highest-paid athlete (after Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo) with earnings of \$105 million for the calendar year.<sup>[10]</sup>

On 8 May 2013, Neymar was rated by SportsPro magazine as the most marketable athlete in the world, ahead of Lionel Messi (2nd) and Cristiano Ronaldo (8th).<sup>[403]</sup> The same month, Neymar launched the Nike Hypervenom football boot.<sup>[404]</sup> In November 2012 advertising agency Loducca, created Neymar's own personal brand logo,<sup>[405]</sup> featuring the N, J and R (Neymar Junior) with the N styled to match Neymar's shirt number 11.<sup>[405]</sup> Neymar starred in a 2014 advert for Beats with other global football stars including Thierry Henry and Luis Suárez, with the theme of 'The Game Before The Game' and the players pre-game ritual of listening to music.<sup>[406]</sup>

In the summer of 2023, [Agence France-Presse](#), citing local authorities, reported that Neymar faces a potential fine of about one million dollars for environmental violations committed during the construction of his [Mangaratiba](#) mansion. The unauthorized diversion of the waterway, the use of beach sand without permission and unauthorized earthworks were mentioned in the report.<sup>[407]</sup>

## Media

Neymar was featured on the front covers of the video games [Pro Evolution Soccer 2012](#) and [Pro Evolution Soccer 2013](#) on the North American version, after [Konami](#) Digital Entertainment announced that he had joined Pro Evolution Soccer.<sup>[408]</sup> Neymar joined Cristiano Ronaldo as a featured cover athlete.<sup>[409][410]</sup> Neymar also features in EA Sports' [FIFA](#) video game series, with the trailer for [FIFA 18](#) showing him in his PSG home jersey.<sup>[411]</sup> He appeared alongside Cristiano Ronaldo on the Champions and Ultimate Edition packs for [FIFA 19](#), where Neymar's "Hang Loose" goal celebration also features in the game.<sup>[412][413]</sup> Neymar also appears as a playable operator in the 2022 first-person shooter [Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II](#) alongside fellow football players [Paul Pogba](#) and [Lionel Messi](#),<sup>[414]</sup> whose character models were released as downloadable content to coincide with the 2022 FIFA World Cup.<sup>[415]</sup>



Neymar at the [Red Bull Arena](#) in Harrison, New Jersey during a match between [New York Red Bulls](#) and [LA Galaxy](#) in 2011

Neymar appeared on the cover of [Time](#) magazine in February 2013, the first Brazilian athlete to do so. The issue included an article by [Bobby Ghosh](#) entitled "The Next Pelé" and subtitled "How the career of Brazilian football star Neymar explains his country's economy".<sup>[416]</sup>

Controversy erupted because of a cover by Brazilian football magazine [Placar](#) that depicted Neymar on a cross. The title read "A Crucificação de Neymar" (the Crucifixion of Neymar) and subtitled: "the Brazilian ace turns scapegoat in a sport where everyone plays dirty".<sup>[417]</sup>

In April 2013, Brazilian cartoonist [Mauricio de Sousa](#) released a [Monica's Gang](#) comic book featuring a younger version of Neymar (called [Neymar Jr.](#)) as the main character.<sup>[418]</sup>

In May 2013, [SportsPro](#) magazine named Neymar as the most marketable athlete on the planet for the second consecutive year. He topped the list ahead of Lionel Messi, [Rory McIlroy](#), [Usain Bolt](#) and Cristiano Ronaldo, among other sportspeople.<sup>[419]</sup> The list measures the monetary value, the age, the force in domestic markets, the charisma and their market potential in the next three years.<sup>[419]</sup> In March 2015, Neymar had the fourth highest social media rank in the world among sportspeople, behind Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and David Beckham, with 52 million Facebook fans.<sup>[420][421]</sup> He has over 200 million Instagram followers, the third highest for a sportsperson (after Cristiano Ronaldo and Messi), and inside the top 20 most followed people.<sup>[422]</sup> In [ESPN](#)'s list of active sportspeople in 2016, Neymar was ranked the fourth most famous athlete in the world.<sup>[423]</sup> In April 2017, Neymar was included in the [Time 100](#), [Time](#) magazine's list of the most influential people in the world.<sup>[9]</sup> In 2019, ESPN again ranked him the world's fourth most famous athlete.<sup>[424]</sup>

To mark the [World Cup](#) commencing in Brazil, in June 2014, Neymar appeared with supermodel [Gisele Bündchen](#) on the front cover of [Vogue](#)'s Brazilian edition.<sup>[425]</sup> In November 2014, Neymar appeared in [FIFA](#)'s "11 against [Ebola](#)" campaign with a selection of top football players from around the world, including Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale, Xavi and Didier Drogba.<sup>[426]</sup> Under the slogan "Together, we can beat Ebola", [FIFA](#)'s campaign was done in conjunction with the [Confederation of African Football](#) and health experts, with the players holding up eleven messages to raise awareness of the disease and ways to combat it.<sup>[426][427]</sup>

In collaboration with [DAZN](#), in 2019 Neymar appeared in [The Making Of](#) series, documentaries which relives the significant games that helped define football's greatest modern icons, with Neymar recounting his performance for Santos against Flamengo in 2011 when he scored that year's [FIFA Puskás Award](#) for Goal of the Year,<sup>[428]</sup> and also the film [Neymar and the Line of King](#) which covers Neymar's journey in becoming one of Brazil's top players.<sup>[429][430]</sup>

Most recently, he had signed a deal with Facebook Gaming.<sup>[431]</sup> He was also the subject of a 2022 [Netflix](#) documentary series titled [Neymar: The Perfect Chaos](#).<sup>[432]</sup>

## Music

Neymar has become an icon in promoting Brazilian modern pop music, particularly [Música sertaneja](#). The video in which Neymar dances in the Santos locker room dancing in front of teammates carrying his recorder making the round of the players and making them react to the tune of Michel Teló's hit "[Ai se eu te pego!](#)" went [viral](#). He made a point of performing his dance antics to the song after scoring goals in football games and appeared live with Teló in one of the latter's concerts. He also supported sertanejo singer [Gusttavo Lima](#) performing live with Lima on

renditions of the singer's hits "Balada" and "Fazer Beber". In 2012, he made cameo appearances in the music video for yet another sertanejo hit "Eu Quero Tchu, Eu Quero Tcha" by João Lucas & Marcelo. In 2013, Neymar appeared on a rap music video, "País do Futebol" by MC Guimê.<sup>[433]</sup>

## Television and films

Year	Title	Role	Note(s)	Type
2012	(fdp)	Encanador	—	TV series (TV)
2017	Os Parças	Himself	—	Full-length film (FL)
2017	XXX: Return of Xander Cage	Himself	—	FL
2019	Money Heist	Monje Joao	—	TV
2019	The Making of	Himself	DAZN presents	TV
2021	Neymar Jr. and the line of kings	Himself	DAZN presents	TV
2022	Neymar: The Perfect Chaos	Himself	Netflix	Docuseries

## Career statistics

### Club

As of match played 3 October 2023<sup>[434][435]</sup>

Club	Season	League			State league <sup>[a]</sup>		National cup <sup>[b]</sup>		League cup <sup>[c]</sup>		Continental		Other		Total	
		Division	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals
<u>Santos</u>	2009	Série A	33	10	12	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	48	14
	2010	Série A	31	17	19	14	8	11	—	—	2 <sup>[d]</sup>	0	—	—	60	42
	2011	Série A	21	13	11	4	—	—	—	—	13 <sup>[e]</sup>	6	2 <sup>[f]</sup>	1	47	24
	2012	Série A	17	14	16	20	—	—	—	—	12 <sup>[e]</sup>	8	2 <sup>[g]</sup>	1	47	43
	2013	Série A	1	0	18	12	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	23	13
	Total		102	54	75	53	15	13	—	27	14	4	2	225	136	
<u>Barcelona</u>	2013–14	La Liga	26	9	—	—	3	1	—	10 <sup>[h]</sup>	4	2 <sup>[l]</sup>	1	41	15	
	2014–15	La Liga	33	22	—	—	6	7	—	12 <sup>[h]</sup>	10	—	—	51	39	
	2015–16	La Liga	34	24	—	—	5	4	—	9 <sup>[h]</sup>	3	1 <sup>[l]</sup>	0	49	31	
	2016–17	La Liga	30	13	—	—	6	3	—	9 <sup>[h]</sup>	4	0	0	45	20	
	Total		123	68	—	—	20	15	—	40	21	3	1	186	105	
<u>Paris Saint-Germain</u>	2017–18	Ligue 1	20	19	—	—	1	2	2	1	7 <sup>[h]</sup>	6	—	—	30	28
	2018–19	Ligue 1	17	15	—	—	3	2	1	1	6 <sup>[h]</sup>	5	1 <sup>[l]</sup>	0	28	23
	2019–20	Ligue 1	15	13	—	—	2	2	3	1	7 <sup>[h]</sup>	3	—	—	27	19
	2020–21	Ligue 1	18	9	—	—	3	1	—	9 <sup>[h]</sup>	6	1 <sup>[l]</sup>	1	31	17	
	2021–22	Ligue 1	22	13	—	—	0	0	—	6 <sup>[h]</sup>	0	0	0	28	13	
	2022–23	Ligue 1	20	13	—	—	2	1	—	6 <sup>[h]</sup>	2	1 <sup>[l]</sup>	2	29	18	
	Total		112	82	—	—	11	8	6	3	41	22	3	3	173	118
<u>Al Hilal</u>	2023–24	Saudi Pro League	3	0	—	—	0	0	—	2 <sup>[k]</sup>	1	—	—	5	1	
Career total			340	204	76	54	46	36	6	3	109	58	10	6	589	360

a. Includes Campeonato Paulista

b. Includes Copa do Brasil, Copa del Rey, Coupe de France

c. Includes Coupe de la Ligue

- d. Appearances in [Copa Sudamericana](#)
- e. Appearances in [Copa Libertadores](#)
- f. Appearances in [FIFA Club World Cup](#)
- g. Appearances in [Recopa Sudamericana](#)
- h. Appearances in [UEFA Champions League](#)
- i. Appearances in [Supercopa de España](#)
- j. Appearance in [Trophée des Champions](#)
- k. Appearances in [AFC Champions League](#)

## International

As of match played 17 October 2023<sup>[436]</sup>

National team	Year	Competitive		Friendly		Total	
		Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals
<a href="#">Brazil</a>	2010	0	0	2	1	2	1
	2011	4 <sup>[a]</sup>	2	9	5	13	7
	2012	0	0	12	9	12	9
	2013	5 <sup>[b]</sup>	4	14	6	19	10
	2014	5 <sup>[c]</sup>	4	9	11	14	15
	2015	4 <sup>[d]</sup>	1	5	3	9	4
	2016	6 <sup>[e]</sup>	4	0	0	6	4
	2017	6 <sup>[e]</sup>	2	2	1	8	3
	2018	5 <sup>[f]</sup>	2	8	5	13	7
	2019	0	0	5	1	5	1
	2020	2 <sup>[g]</sup>	3	0	0	2	3
	2021	13 <sup>[h]</sup>	6	0	0	13	6
	2022	4 <sup>[i]</sup>	3	4	4	8	7
	2023	4 <sup>[i]</sup>	2	0	0	4	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>79</b>



Neymar against Croatia at 2014 FIFA World Cup. He scored two goals in the match.

- a. Appearances in [2011 Copa América](#)
- b. Appearances in [2013 FIFA Confederations Cup](#)
- c. Appearances in [2014 FIFA World Cup](#)
- d. Two appearances and one goal in [2015 Copa América](#), two appearances in [2018 FIFA World Cup qualification](#)
- e. Appearance(s) in [2018 FIFA World Cup qualification](#)
- f. Appearances in [2018 FIFA World Cup](#)
- g. Appearance(s) in [2022 FIFA World Cup qualification](#)
- h. Six appearances and two goals in [2021 Copa América](#), seven appearances and three goals in [2022 FIFA World Cup qualification](#)
- i. One appearance and one goal in [2022 FIFA World Cup qualification](#), three appearances and two goals in [2022 FIFA World Cup](#)
- j. Four appearances and two goals in [2026 FIFA World Cup qualification](#)

## Honours

### Santos<sup>[437]</sup>

- [Copa do Brasil](#): 2010
- [Campeonato Paulista](#): 2010, 2011, 2012
- [Copa Libertadores](#): 2011
- [Recopa Sudamericana](#): 2012

### Barcelona<sup>[437]</sup>

- [La Liga](#): 2014–15, 2015–16
- [Copa del Rey](#): 2014–15, 2015–16, 2016–17
- [Supercopa de España](#): 2013
- [UEFA Champions League](#): 2014–15
- [FIFA Club World Cup](#): 2015

## Paris Saint-Germain

- [Ligue 1: 2017–18](#),<sup>[438]</sup> [2018–19](#),<sup>[439]</sup> [2019–20](#), [2021–22](#),<sup>[440]</sup> [2022–23](#)<sup>[441]</sup>
- [Coupe de France: 2017–18](#),<sup>[442]</sup> [2019–20](#),<sup>[163]</sup> [2020–21](#),<sup>[443]</sup> runner-up: [2018–19](#)<sup>[444]</sup>
- [Coupe de la Ligue: 2017–18](#),<sup>[445]</sup> [2019–20](#)<sup>[164]</sup>
- [Trophée des Champions: 2018](#),<sup>[446]</sup> [2020](#),<sup>[447]</sup> [2022](#)<sup>[448]</sup>
- [UEFA Champions League: runner-up: 2019–20](#)<sup>[169]</sup>

## Brazil U20<sup>[437]</sup>

- [South American U-20 Championship: 2011](#)

## Brazil Olympic

- [Summer Olympics: 2016; runner-up: 2012](#)

## Brazil

- [FIFA Confederations Cup: 2013](#)<sup>[257]</sup>
- [Copa América runner-up: 2021](#)

## Individual

### Awards

- [Campeonato Brasileiro Série A Team of the Year: 2010, 2011, 2012](#)<sup>[449][450][451]</sup>
- [Chuteira de Ouro: 2010, 2011, 2012](#)
- [Bola de Prata: 2010, 2011](#)
- [Bola de Ouro: 2011](#)
- [Campeonato Brasileiro Série A Best Player: 2011](#)<sup>[450]</sup>
- [World Soccer Young Player of the Year: 2011](#)
- [Copa Libertadores Most Valuable Player: 2011](#)
- [FIFA Club World Cup Bronze Ball: 2011](#)
- [South American Footballer of the Year: 2011, 2012](#)
- [FIFA Puskás Award: 2011](#)
- [Bola de Ouro Hors Concours: 2012](#)
- [FIFA Confederations Cup Golden Ball: 2013](#)
- [FIFA Confederations Cup Bronze Shoe: 2013](#)
- [FIFA Confederations Cup Dream Team: 2013](#)
- [FIFA World Cup Bronze Boot: 2014](#)
- [FIFA World Cup Dream Team: 2014](#)
- [Samba Gold: 2014, 2015, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2022](#)<sup>[452][453][454][455]</sup>
- [UEFA Champions League Squad of the Season: 2014–15](#),<sup>[456]</sup> [2019–20](#),<sup>[457]</sup> [2020–21](#)<sup>[458]</sup>
- [La Liga Best World Player: 2014–15](#)<sup>[459]</sup>
- [La Liga Player of the Month: November 2015](#)<sup>[460]</sup>
- [UNFP Ligue 1 Player of the Year: 2017–18](#)<sup>[461]</sup>
- [UNFP Ligue 1 Team of the Year: 2017–18](#),<sup>[462]</sup> [2018–19](#),<sup>[463]</sup> [2020–21](#)<sup>[464]</sup>
- [UNFP Ligue 1 Player of the Month: January 2020](#),<sup>[465]</sup> [August 2022](#)<sup>[205]</sup>
- [UEFA Team of the Year: 2015](#),<sup>[466]</sup> [2020](#)<sup>[467]</sup>
- [FIFA FIFPro World11: 2015](#),<sup>[468]</sup> [2017](#)<sup>[469]</sup>
- [IFFHS Men's World Team: 2017](#)<sup>[470]</sup>
- [ESM Team of the Year: 2017–18](#)<sup>[471]</sup>
- [IFFHS CONMEBOL Team of the Decade: 2011–2020](#)<sup>[472]</sup>
- [Copa América Team of the Tournament: 2021](#)<sup>[473]</sup>



Neymar with the Golden Ball award for best player at the [2013 Confederations Cup](#)

### Performances

- [Copa do Brasil top scorer: 2010](#)
- [South American U-20 Championship top scorer: 2011](#)
- [Campeonato Paulista top scorer: 2012](#)
- [Copa Libertadores top scorer: 2012](#) (tied with Matías Alustiza)
- [Copa Libertadores 2nd top assist provider: 2012](#)<sup>[474]</sup>
- [Copa del Rey top scorer: 2014–15](#)<sup>[475]</sup>
- [UEFA Champions League top scorer: 2014–15](#) (tied with Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi)

- FIFA Club World Cup top assist provider: 2015<sup>[476]</sup>
- UEFA Champions League top assist provider: 2015–16, 2016–17<sup>[477]</sup>

## See also



- [List of top international men's football goalscorers by country](#)
- [List of men's footballers with 100 or more international caps](#)
- [List of men's footballers with 50 or more international goals](#)
- [List of most expensive association football transfers](#)

## Notes

1. Although Barcelona did not classify Neymar's €222 million buyout clause as a transfer fee, it was functionally identical to a transfer fee, since it cancelled his then-current contract with Barcelona (as in a typical transfer). The payment, provided by an unknown source, made him the most expensive football player.<sup>[4][5]</sup>

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