

= Martin Ødegaard =

Martin Ødegaard (Norwegian pronunciation : [?m??n ?ø?d?????] ; born 17 December 1998) is a Norwegian professional footballer who plays as an attacking midfielder for Spanish club Real Madrid Castilla and the Norway national team .

He made his debut for Strømsgodset Toppfotball on 13 April 2014 , becoming the youngest player to feature in Tippeligaen , and became its youngest goalscorer on 16 May . After being a regular part of the team in his first season and training with several foreign clubs , Ødegaard was signed by Real Madrid in January 2015 . He is currently playing for their reserve team , Real Madrid Castilla , but trains mainly with the first team . On 23 May 2015 , he became the youngest player to represent Real Madrid .

Ødegaard made his international debut against the United Arab Emirates on 27 August 2014 , becoming the youngest debutant for the senior team at the age of 15 years and 253 days . On 13 October 2014 , he became the youngest player to feature in a qualifying match for the UEFA European Championship .

= = Club career = =

= = Youth = =

Ødegaard spent his first years in the local sports club Drammen Strong . His father , Hans Erik Ødegaard , a former footballer , co @-@ founded a football section in the club , and became the coach of his son 's team . In 2005 , when Ødegaard was six , his parents and others each invested 50 @,@ 000 kroner so that the local club could refit their gravel field , Kjappen , with artificial turf . This has been cited as crucial for his development , as Ødegaard spent countless hours on the field .

Drammen Strong was twice selected by Ødegaard to receive a prize of 50 @,@ 000 kroner (? 5 @,@ 800) , when the young player was given the Statoil talent award for April 2014 and for the 2014 season . Later , in 2015 , Drammen Strong received 250 @,@ 000 kroner , equivalent to approximately ? 29 @,@ 000 , as a gift from Strømsgodset Toppfotball when Ødegaard was sold to Real Madrid .

In 2009 , Ødegaard joined the youth division of Strømsgodset . He trained and played with older boys .

The Norwegian FA also organizes young talents in local district teams . Ødegaard played his first matches for the Buskerud team in January 2010 , when he had just turned 11 . The other players on the team , and opponents , were 2 ? 3 years older . The coach noted : " Handles things brilliantly . Good choices . Good touch , smart in position game " . Ødegaard trained with this team weekly for the next three years . He mostly played left back , as the coaches felt this would give him a positive experience with many ball touches while still playing against physically much stronger players . In attack , he was given free rein due to his ability to " see solutions and spaces that we as coaches were not even close to thinking about . "

In 2011 , at age 12 , he impressed former football manager Lars Tjørnås during a nationwide tournament for under @-@ 16s :

The best 15 @-@ year @-@ olds in the country were gathered for a tournament between the top clubs ... It was definitely not the first time he had astonished his opponents or the spectators . He was three or four years younger than the others . It was impossible not to realize that we were witnessing something out of the ordinary .

= = Strømsgodset = =

Ødegaard began training with the Strømsgodset first team in 2012 , aged 13 . He made his first team debut the same year , in a mid @-@ season friendly against local rivals Mjøndalen IF . He also

had short training visits to Bayern Munich and Manchester United . In 2013 , at age 14 , Ødegaard played for both Strømsgodset 's junior team (normally aged 17 ? 19) , and the club 's third team at the fifth tier of Norwegian senior football .

In January 2014 , it was agreed that 15 @-@ year @-@ old Ødegaard would be part of Strømsgodset 's first team for the year , but no professional contract was signed . The competition rules state that to play in Tippeligaen , players must have a professional contract to be eligible . However , the club included Ødegaard on the " B @-@ list " for amateur players , which made him eligible for up to three matches per season . Ødegaard was unable to train with Strømsgodset in the daytime since he was still in compulsory education . Thus , as part of the agreement , he trained two evenings a week with Mjøndalen IF , a semi @-@ professional First Division team at the time , where his father was one of the coaches .

He made his league debut for Strømsgodset in a match against Aalesunds FK at Marienlyst Stadion on 13 April 2014 . Aged 15 years and 118 days , he became the youngest footballer ever to play in Tippeligaen . On 5 May , he signed a professional contract with Strømsgodset , lasting until the end of 2015 . This removed the restriction of three matches per season . Eleven days later , he scored his first professional goal and became the youngest goalscorer in Tippeligaen when he scored the fourth goal for Strømsgodset in a 4 ? 1 home victory against Sarpsborg 08 FF . He made his European debut on 16 July , replacing Lars Christopher Vilsvik for the final five minutes of the club 's 1 ? 0 home defeat to Steaua Bucure?ti in the UEFA Champions League second qualifying round .

In late July , an away match at Sandnes Ulf prompted serious discussion in national newspapers VG , Dagbladet and Aftenposten , on his possible call @-@ up to the Norwegian national team . Ødegaard was involved in all three goals for his team , including a goal and an assist . He was also fouled for a penalty which was missed by a teammate . John Arne Riise , the most @-@ capped player on the Norwegian national team , was impressed , and " demanded " Ødegaard should be called up to play against the big nations of Europe . Former manager for Norway , Nils Johan Semb , said after the match that " Martin is one of the best 15 @-@ year @-@ olds in Europe , " but added that he should not be rushed into the national team . Ødegaard himself stated to the press that if he would be asked to play for Norway , he would say yes .

In the away match against IK Start on 15 August the same year , Ødegaard was placed on the right wing , and made all three assists for Strømsgodset , who won 3 ? 2 . He scored two goals in a match for the first time in his career in the 2 ? 1 win against Lillestrøm SK on 19 October . Strømsgodset finished fourth in the league , qualifying for the first qualifying round of the UEFA Europa League , with Ødegaard having scored 5 goals in 23 league games in addition to 7 assists .

In December 2014 , during the Norwegian close season , he trained with the first teams at Liverpool , Bayern Munich , Manchester United and Manchester City . He also visited Arsenal . In January 2015 , he trained with Real Madrid .

= = = Real Madrid = = =

On 21 January 2015 , Real Madrid reached an agreement to sign Ødegaard from Strømsgodset , for a fee reported by Spanish media as around ? 3 million . Norwegian media reported , however , that the fee was 35 million kroner (approximately ? 4 million) , which could rise to 70 ? 75 million kroner (approximately ? 8 ? 8 @.@ 5 million) on certain conditions . In a press conference after the signing , Real Madrid announced that Ødegaard would train with both the club 's first team and the reserves , Real Madrid Castilla . He would play for the latter team , which was managed by Zinedine Zidane at the time .

He made his unofficial debut for the reserves on 4 February , in a 3 ? 3 friendly draw with Beijing Guoan . He was subsequently named in the first team 's UEFA Champions League squad . Ødegaard was assigned the number 21 . His official debut for Castilla came on 8 February , coming on in the last 20 minutes as a substitute in the 2 ? 2 draw against Athletic Bilbao B in Segunda División B. On 21 February , he scored his first goal for the club in a 4 ? 0 win over Barakaldo CF at the Estadio Alfredo Di Stéfano , opening the scoring after seven minutes .

In April , Ødegaard was dropped from Castilla after a run of four defeats , with staff finding problems

with him training with the first team while playing for the reserves , in addition to a language barrier . First team manager Carlo Ancelotti called for fans to be patient while Ødegaard settles in a new country . On 29 April , he was included in Real Madrid 's matchday squad for the first time for a home La Liga fixture against UD Almería , as Ancelotti was without Gareth Bale , Luka Modrić and Karim Benzema through injury . However , he did not feature in the 3 ? 0 victory .

On 23 May , in the final fixture of the season , he made his debut for Real Madrid , coming @-@ on as a 58th @-@ minute substitute for hat @-@ trick scorer and then @-@ reigning FIFA Ballon d 'Or Cristiano Ronaldo in an eventual 7 ? 3 home win over Getafe CF . He became the youngest debutant in the history of the club at 16 years and 157 days old .

Ødegaard was a regular starter for Castilla during the 2015 ? 16 season . On 17 April 2016 , he was praised in Diario AS for his performance in a 3 ? 0 home win over SD Gernika Club , winning a penalty kick which Mariano scored . The result put the team top of the table . The team won the group ahead of Barakaldo CF on the last day , with Ødegaard scoring his first of the season in a 6 ? 1 thrashing of La Roda CF .

= = International career = =

= = = Youth = = =

Martin Ødegaard featured in the starting line @-@ ups for the two home matches of the Norway national under @-@ 15 football team versus Sweden on 17 and 19 September 2013 . Both matches were won by Norway , 2 ? 1 and 2 ? 0 .

Ødegaard played for the Norway national under @-@ 16 football team in a tournament with Scotland , the United States and France in Turkey in January 2014 . He played the full 90 minutes in all three matches , which resulted in a win versus Scotland and two losses .

He was promoted to the Norway national under @-@ 17 football team for the away match against Iceland on 28 February 2014 . Ødegaard came on as a substitute in the 62nd minute , and helped secure a 2 ? 1 win for his country . Subsequently , he was in the starting line @-@ up for the next three away matches ; in the 3 ? 0 win against Iceland on 2 March , in the 2 ? 3 loss against Turkey on 25 March and finally in the 0 ? 3 loss against Greece on 30 March 2014 .

In September 2014 , he was selected for the Norway national under @-@ 21 football team for the final match of the 2015 UEFA European Under @-@ 21 Championship qualification . He played the full match against Portugal , as a forward , but was unable to prevent the opponents from winning 2 ? 1 , despite being named Man of the Match .

An unused substitute for the senior team on 6 September 2015 against Croatia , he joined the under @-@ 21 team again the following day in the 2017 UEFA European Under @-@ 21 Championship qualifying match against England . He played the full 90 minutes in the match , which Norway lost 0 ? 1 at home after a penalty goal by James Ward @-@ Prowse .

= = = Senior = = =

On 19 August 2014 , Ødegaard was called up for a senior international against the United Arab Emirates in Stavanger and played the entire goalless draw on 27 August , becoming the youngest player to play for Norway at senior level , at 15 years and 253 days . The record was previously held by Tormod Kjellsen , who was 15 years and 351 days on his debut in 1910 .

On 30 September 2014 , he was called up to Norway 's UEFA Euro 2016 qualifying matches against Malta and Bulgaria . He made his competitive debut in the latter , replacing Mats Møller Dæhli in the 64th minute of a 2 ? 1 home win . At the age of 15 years and 300 days , this made him the youngest player to ever play in a European Championship qualifier , breaking a record held since 1983 by Icelandic Sigurður Jónsson .

On 29 March 2015 , Ødegaard became the youngest player to start a European Championship qualifier at the age of 16 years and 101 days in a 5 ? 1 loss to Croatia . On 8 June , he was man of

the match in Norway 's 0 ? 0 friendly draw with Scandinavian rivals Sweden in Oslo . After Norway came third in their qualification group , Ødegaard was named in their squad for a play @-@ off against Hungary . Unused in the first leg , he was substituted at half time in the second on 15 November , as Norway lost 2 ? 1 on the night and 3 ? 1 on aggregate .

= = Playing style = =

An article in the Liverpool Echo described Ødegaard as " an attack @-@ minded midfielder very much in the modern mould . Diminutive , quick @-@ footed , with natural balance , pace and , perhaps surprisingly for one so young , excellent shooting power " . David Nielsen , his manager at Strømsgodset , likened him to David Silva and Lionel Messi . Amidst transfer speculation in December 2014 , he opined that the player would develop better with a second season in Norway .

In September 2014 , international teammate and Rosenborg winger Morten Gamst Pedersen dubbed Ødegaard the most talented player he had ever seen , saying " For his age he is unbelievable ? his knowledge of the game is unbelievable and his technical skills are fantastic " . Pedersen also stated that Ødegaard needed time to improve at the physical aspects of the sport .

When describing his son , Hans Erik Ødegaard said , " It 's the pace of the game that makes the difference in adjusting to different levels . We 've used so many hours in working with his first and second touch to take off the pressure . We have worked a lot on bringing the ball closely to his feet , so he can change direction quickly , so even if he 's physically weaker than the others he doesn 't get caught because he 's able to get away . "

After Ødegaard signed for Real Madrid , Norwegian former football scout Tor @-@ Kristian Karlsen praised his mentality , stating that he had " overcome every challenge in front of him " . Karlsen called him " so level @-@ headed and mature " and noted his intelligence and performance at school , while also saying that this could be a disadvantage as " The best footballers tend to have a bit of needle , a bit of fire " . While former Norway international Jan Åge Fjørtoft was supportive of the transfer to Real Madrid due to the opportunity to learn from Zidane , he warned that at the age of 16 he needed time to develop : " Comparing Ødegaard to Messi is nonsense from the media . Messi is a player who can make the difference and Martin can do the same , but any comparisons should not be taken seriously " . Ødegaard reacted to the attention on him by saying " If you get carried away now , you won ? t get far in 10 years . I 'm supposed to be at my best then , not now . That I know " .

= = Personal life = =

Ødegaard is the son of former footballer Hans Erik Ødegaard , who played as a midfielder for Strømsgodset and Sandefjord Fotball and was assistant manager of Mjøndalen IF from 2009 to 2015 . He was still attending a local lower secondary school when he made his professional debut , but has since completed his compulsory education in Norway . He is a supporter of English team Liverpool , whom he has described as his " dream club " . Ødegaard looked up to Barcelona 's Lionel Messi , although on joining their rivals Real Madrid he was reported to have deleted tweets in which he had praised Messi . Due to his age , Ødegaard was absent from the computer game Football Manager 2015 until his father gave permission to use his son 's likeness .

Ødegaard has grown up in a Christian family and has expressed that religious faith is an important part of his life . He was named in Time 's 30 most influential teenagers of 2015 .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Club = = =

As of 16 May 2016

= = = International = = =

As of 29 March 2016

= = Honours = =

Individual

Tippeligaen Young Player of the Year : 2014

Idrettsgallaen Breakthrough of the Year : 2014