



Lionel Messi

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Lionel Andrés "Leo" Messi^{[[note 1](#)]} (Spanish pronunciation: [ljoˈnel anˈdɾes ˈmesi] [ⓘ]; born 24 June 1987) is an Argentine professional [footballer](#) who plays as a [forward](#) for and [captains](#) both [Major League Soccer](#) club [Inter Miami](#) and the [Argentina national team](#). Widely regarded as one of the greatest players of all time, Messi set numerous records for [individual accolades won](#) throughout [his professional footballing career](#) such as eight [Ballon d'Or](#) awards and eight times being named the [world's best player](#) by [FIFA](#).^{[[note 2](#)]} He is the most decorated player in the history of professional football having won [45 team trophies](#),^{[[note 3](#)]} including twelve [Big Five](#) league titles, four [UEFA Champions Leagues](#), two [Copa Américas](#), and one [FIFA World Cup](#). Messi [holds the records](#) for most [European Golden Shoes](#) (6), most goals in a calendar year (91), most goals for a single club (672, with [Barcelona](#)), most [goals](#) (474), [hat-tricks](#) (36) and [assists](#) (192) in [La Liga](#), most [assists](#) (18) and [goal contributions](#) (32) in the [Copa América](#), most [goal contributions](#) (21) in the [World Cup](#), most [international appearances](#) (191) and [international goals](#) (112) by a South American male, and the second-most in the latter category outright. A prolific goalscorer and creative playmaker, Messi has scored over [850 senior career goals](#) and has provided over 380 assists for club and country.^{[[21](#)]}

Born in [Rosario](#), Argentina, Messi relocated to Spain to join [Barcelona](#) at age 13, and made his competitive debut at age 17 in October 2004. He gradually established himself as an integral player for the club, and during his first uninterrupted season at age 22 in [2008–09](#) he helped [Barcelona](#) achieve the first [treble](#) in Spanish football. This resulted in Messi winning the [first](#) of four consecutive [Ballons d'Or](#), and by the [2011–12 season](#) he would set [La Liga](#) and [European](#) records for most goals in a season and establish himself as [Barcelona's all-time top scorer](#). The following two seasons, he finished second for the [Ballon d'Or](#) behind [Cristiano Ronaldo](#), his perceived [career rival](#). However, he regained his best form during

Lionel Messi



Messi with [Argentina](#) at the [2022 FIFA World Cup](#)

Personal information

Full name Lionel Andrés Messi^[1]
Date of birth 24 June 1987 (age 37)^[1]
Place of birth [Rosario](#), Argentina
Height 1.70 m (5 ft 7 in)^[1]
Position(s) [Forward](#)

Team information

Current team [Inter Miami](#)
Number 10

Youth career

1992–1995 [Grandoli](#)
1995–2000 [Newell's Old Boys](#)
2000–2004 [Barcelona](#)

Senior career*

Years	Team	Apps	(Gls)
2003–2004	Barcelona C	10	(5)
2004–2005	Barcelona B	22	(6)
2004–2021	Barcelona	520	(474)
2021–2023	Paris Saint-Germain	58	(22)

the [2014–15 campaign](#), where he became the all-time top scorer in La Liga, led Barcelona to a historic second treble, and won a fifth Ballon d'Or in [2015](#). He assumed Barcelona's captaincy in 2018 and won a record sixth Ballon d'Or in [2019](#). During his overall tenure at Barcelona, Messi won a [club-record](#) 34 trophies, including ten La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues, among others. Financial difficulties at Barcelona led to Messi signing with French club [Paris Saint-Germain](#) in August 2021, where he would win the [Ligue 1](#) title during both of his seasons there. He joined Major League Soccer club Inter Miami in July 2023.

An Argentine international, Messi is the national team's [all-time leading goalscorer](#) and [most-capped player](#). His style of play as a diminutive, left-footed [dribbler](#), drew career-long comparisons with compatriot [Diego Maradona](#), who described Messi as [his successor](#). At the youth level, he won the [2005 FIFA World Youth Championship](#) and [gold medal](#) in the [2008 Summer Olympics](#). After his senior debut in 2005, Messi became the youngest Argentine to play and score in a World Cup in [2006](#). Assuming captaincy in 2011, he then led Argentina to three consecutive finals in the [2014 FIFA World Cup](#), the [2015 Copa América](#) and the [Copa América Centenario](#), all of which they would lose. After initially announcing his international retirement in 2016, he returned to help his country narrowly qualify for the [2018 FIFA World Cup](#), which they would exit early. Messi and the national team finally broke Argentina's 28-year trophy drought by winning the [2021 Copa América](#), which helped him secure his seventh Ballon d'Or [that year](#). He then led Argentina to win the [2022 Finalissima](#), as well as the [2022 FIFA World Cup](#), his country's third overall world championship and first in 36 years. This followed with a record-extending eighth Ballon d'Or in [2023](#), and a victory in the [2024 Copa América](#).

Messi has endorsed sportswear company [Adidas](#) since 2006. According to [France Football](#), he was the world's highest-paid footballer for five years out of six between 2009 and 2014, and was ranked the [world's highest-paid athlete](#) by [Forbes](#) in 2019 and 2022. Messi was among [Time](#)'s [100 most influential people in the world](#) in 2011, 2012, and 2023. In 2020 and 2023, he was named the [Laureus World Sportsman of the Year](#), the first team-sport athlete to win it. In 2020, Messi was named to the [Ballon d'Or Dream Team](#) and became the second footballer and second team-sport athlete to surpass \$1 billion in career earnings. Following his arrival and impact on football in the US, Messi was named [Time](#)'s [Athlete of the Year](#) in 2023, and was bestowed with the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#) by decision of the [president of the United States](#) in 2025.

2023–	Inter Miami	32 (25)
International career[‡]		
2004–2005	Argentina U20	18 (14)
2008	Argentina U23	5 ^[a] (2)
2005–	Argentina	191 (112)
Medal record		[show]
Website	messi.com	
	Signature	
		
*Club domestic league appearances and goals, correct as of 02:57, 4 May 2025 (UTC)		
‡ National team caps and goals, correct as of 08:41, 20 November 2024 (UTC)		



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Early life



Messi's childhood home in [Rosario](#), Santa Fe.

Messi was born on 24 June 1987 in [Rosario](#), Santa Fe Province.^[22] He was the third of four children of Jorge Messi, a steel factory manager, and his wife Celia Cuccittini, who worked in a magnet manufacturing workshop. On his father's side, he is of Italian and Spanish descent, the great-grandson of immigrants from the north-central [Adriatic Marche](#) region of Italy, and on his mother's side, he has primarily Italian ancestry.^[3] Growing up in a tight-knit, football-loving family, "Leo" developed a passion for the sport from an early age, playing constantly with his older brothers, Rodrigo and Matías, and his cousins, [Maximiliano](#) and [Emanuel Biancucchi](#), both of whom became professional footballers.^[23]

At the age of four he joined local club Grandoli, where he was coached by his father. Another early influence came from his maternal grandmother, Celia, who accompanied him to training and matches.^[24] He was greatly affected by her death, shortly before his eleventh birthday. Since then, as a devout [Catholic](#), he has celebrated his goals by looking up and pointing to the sky in tribute to his grandmother.^{[25][26]}

Youth career

Newell's Old Boys

"When you saw him you would think: this kid can't play ball. He's a dwarf, he's too fragile, too small. But immediately you'd realise that he was born different, that he was a phenomenon and that he was going to be something impressive."

– [Newell's Old Boys](#) youth coach [Adrián Coria](#) shares his first impression of the 12-year-old Messi.^[27]

Messi is a lifelong supporter of [Newell's Old Boys](#), based in Rosario. When he was seven years old, he first started playing for Newell's. During the six years he played for them, he scored almost 500 goals, and was a member of "The Machine of '87", a nearly unbeatable youth side named for the year of their birth. Messi would regularly entertain crowds by performing ball tricks during half-time, when the first team played home games.^{[28][29][30]} His goalscoring idol growing up was Brazilian striker [Ronaldo](#), who Messi called "the best forward I've ever seen".^[31]

His future as a professional player was threatened when, aged 10, he was diagnosed with a [growth hormone deficiency](#). He began [growth hormone therapy](#) at age 11,^[32] however his father's health insurance covered only two years of the therapy, which cost at least \$1,000 per month. Newell's agreed to contribute, but later reneged on their promise.^[33] He was scouted by Buenos Aires club [River Plate](#), whose [playmaker Pablo Aimar](#) he idolised.^{[34][35]} It was speculated for a

time that he failed to sign with River Plate due to his ill health; however, in a 2019 interview, Messi revealed that River Plate had wanted to sign him after he scored four goals at a trial, and even offered to pay for his medical treatment, however Newell's refused to release his player card, preventing the transfer.^[36]

Barcelona

As the Messi family had relatives in Catalonia, they sought to arrange a trial with [Barcelona](#) in September 2000. First-team director [Charly Rexach](#) immediately wanted to sign him, but the board of directors hesitated; at the time it was highly unusual for European clubs to sign foreign players of such a young age. On 14 December, an ultimatum was issued for Barcelona to prove their commitment, and Rexach, with no other paper at hand, offered a contract on a paper [napkin](#).^{[34][37]} In February 2001, the family relocated to Barcelona, where they moved into an apartment near the club's stadium, [Camp Nou](#). During his first year in Spain, Messi rarely played with the *Infantiles* due to a transfer conflict with Newell's; as a foreigner, he could only be fielded in friendlies and the Catalan league. Without football, he struggled to integrate into the team. He was reserved by nature, and was so quiet that some of his teammates initially believed he was mute. At home, he suffered from homesickness after his mother moved back to Rosario with his brothers and younger sister, María Sol, while he stayed in Barcelona with his father.^{[28][37][38]}



Messi enrolled at Barcelona's youth academy, [La Masia](#), aged 13.

After a year at Barcelona's youth academy, [La Masia](#), Messi was finally enrolled in the [Royal Spanish Football Federation](#) (RFEF) in February 2002. Now he could play in all competitions, and quickly befriended his teammates, among whom were [Cesc Fàbregas](#) and [Gerard Piqué](#).^[39] After completing his growth hormone therapy at 14,^[40] Messi became an integral part of the "Baby Dream Team", Barcelona's greatest-ever youth side. During his first full season (2002–03), he was top scorer with 36 goals in 30 games for the *Cadetes A*, who won an unprecedented treble of the league, the Spanish cup, and the Copa Catalunya.^{[39][41]} In the Copa Catalunya final, their 4–1 victory over [Espanyol](#) became referred to in club lore as the *partido de la máscara*, the final of the mask. A week after suffering a broken cheekbone during a league match, Messi was allowed to start the game on the condition that he wear a plastic protector; soon hindered by the mask, he took it off and scored two goals in 10 minutes before his substitution.^[42] At the close of the season, he received an offer to join [Arsenal](#), his first from a foreign club. Although Fàbregas and Piqué soon left for [England](#) with their own offers, Messi chose to remain in Barcelona.^{[37][43][44]}

Messi continued to progress through his club's ranks at a rapid pace, debuting for four youth teams during the 2003–04 season.^[45] After being named player of the tournament in four separate international pre-season competitions with the *Juvenil B*, he played only one official match with the team before being promoted to the *Juvenil A*. In the *Juvenil A* he scored 18 goals in 11 league games.^{[46][47]} Messi was then one of several youth players called up to strengthen a depleted first team during the international break. French winger [Ludovic Giuly](#) explained that Messi caught everyone's attention in a training session with [Frank Rijkaard](#)'s first team: "He destroyed us all... They were kicking him all over the place to avoid being ridiculed by this kid, he just got up and kept on playing. He would dribble past four players and score a goal. Even the team's starting centre-backs were nervous. He was an alien."^[48]

"It seemed as if he had been playing with us all his life."

– Barcelona's then assistant coach [Henk ten Cate](#) on Messi's first-team debut.^[49]

At 16 years, four months, and 23 days old, Messi made his first-team debut when he came on in the 75th minute during a friendly against [José Mourinho's Porto](#) on 16 November 2003.^{[37][50]} His performance, creating two chances and a shot on goal, impressed the technical staff, and he subsequently began training daily with the club's reserve side, [Barcelona B](#), as well as weekly with the first team.^[51] After his first training session with the senior squad, Barça's new star player,

Ronaldinho, told his teammates that he believed the 16-year-old would become an even better player than himself.^[52] Ronaldinho soon befriended Messi, whom he called "little brother". This greatly eased Messi's transition into the first team.^{[53][54]}

To gain further match experience, Messi joined **Barcelona C** in addition to the *Juvenil A*, playing his first game for the third team on 29 November. He helped save them from the relegation zone of the **Tercera División**, scoring five goals in ten games, including a hat-trick in eight minutes during a **Copa del Rey** match while man-marked by **Sevilla's Sergio Ramos**.^{[46][55]} His progress was reflected in his first professional contract, signed on 4 February 2004, which lasted until 2012 and contained an initial **buyout clause** of €30 million. A month later, on 6 March, he made his debut for Barcelona B in the **Segunda División B**, and his buyout clause automatically increased to €80 million.^{[46][56]} He played five games with the B team that season but did not score.^[57] Physically he was weaker than his opponents, who were often much older and taller, and in training he worked on increasing his muscle mass and overall strength in order to be able to shake off defenders. Towards the end of the season, he returned to both youth teams, helping the *Juvenil B* win the league. He finished the campaign having scored goals for four of his five teams, with a total of 36 goals in all official competitions.^{[46][55]}

Club career

*Main article: **Career of Lionel Messi § Club career***

Barcelona

2004–2008: Rise to the first team

Messi began the **2004–05 season** as a guaranteed starter for the **Barcelona B** team, but after some lobbying by the senior players, he was promoted to the first team by manager **Frank Rijkaard**.^[52] He made his **La Liga** debut for Barcelona on 16 October 2004 against **Espanyol**,^[37] and scored his first senior goal on 1 May 2005 against **Albacete**, from an assist by **Ronaldinho**, becoming at that time the youngest-ever scorer for the club.^{[58][59]} At 17 years, three months, and 22 days old, he was at the time the youngest player to represent Barcelona in an official competition, and the club won the **league title** during that season.^{[54][60]}

On his 18th birthday, he signed his first contract as a senior team player, a five-year contract through 2010 with a release clause of €150 million.^[61] Three months later, as his performance continued to make waves, his contract was updated to a nine-year contract, doubling his salary and keeping him at the club until 2014.^{[56][62]}

Barcelona began the **2005–06 season** by winning the **Supercopa de España** without Messi, who was not selected to participate in the competition.^[19] By the end of the season, the team won **La Liga** again as well as the **UEFA Champions League**, although Messi did not play in the **final** for the latter due to injury.^{[63][64]}

During the **2006–07 season**, Messi scored his first **hat-trick** in a **Clásico** against **Real Madrid**, the first player to do so in 12 years.^[65] An incredibly finesse goal from Messi against **Getafe** and another goal scored by a handball



Messi (pictured in 2005) at the age of 18 playing for **FC Barcelona**, where he played for 17 years.

against Espanyol gained notice for their similarities to the two famous goals scored by fellow Argentine [Diego Maradona](#) in the [1986 World Cup match against England](#), drawing [comparisons between the two](#) that Messi would face throughout his career.^{[66][67][68]} The team finished the season with only one trophy – the [2006 Supercopa de España](#).

Barcelona finished the next [2007–08 season](#) trophyless, leading to Rijkaard's departure.^[69]

2008–2012: Success under Pep Guardiola

At the beginning of the [2008–09 season](#), his first under Barcelona's new manager, former captain [Pep Guardiola](#), Messi was given the [number 10](#) shirt.^[70] Over time, he effectively became the tactical focal point of Guardiola's possession-based system, increasing his goalscoring rate as a result.^[71] During that season, Messi scored 38 total goals, and alongside [Samuel Eto'o](#) and [Thierry Henry](#), contributed to a total of 100 goals in all competitions, a record at the time for the club.^{[72][73]} Messi played as a [false nine](#) for the first time in a *Clásico* against Real Madrid, setting up his side's first goal and scoring twice in the team's greatest-ever score at [Santiago Bernabéu Stadium](#).^{[74][75]} He played his first [final](#), winning the [Copa del Rey](#).^[76] In addition, Barcelona won the [La Liga title](#) and later won the [Champions League](#), thus achieving the first [treble](#) in the history of Spanish football.^[77]



Messi during the 2009 [Joan Gamper Trophy](#) against [Manchester City](#).

During the first half of the [2009–10 season](#), Barcelona would also win the [Supercopa de España](#), [UEFA Super Cup](#) and [FIFA Club World Cup](#), resulting in becoming the first club to achieve the sextuple.^{[78][79]} Messi finished as the [Champions League top scorer](#), the youngest in the tournament's history.^[80] For his efforts in 2009, Messi won the [Ballon d'Or](#) and the [FIFA World Player of the Year](#) award.^[81] Messi scored a total of 47 goals in all competitions, equaling [Ronaldo's](#) club record from the [1996–97 campaign](#).^{[82][83]} He finished the season as top scorer in the [Champions League](#),^[84] and La Liga, winning his [second consecutive league](#) trophy and earned his first [European Golden Shoe](#).^{[83][85]} After the team won the Champions League, he signed a new 7-year contract

through 2016.^[61]

In the [2010–11 campaign](#), Messi won the [Supercopa de España](#),^[86] [Champions League](#),^[87] and a third consecutive [La Liga title](#). His club performances in 2010 earned him his second consecutive [Ballon d'Or](#).^[88] Messi was the top scorer in the Champions League, for the third consecutive year,^[89] and the league's top scorer and assist provider.^{[90][91]} He became Barcelona's all-time single-season top scorer with 53 goals.^{[90][92]}

Messi began the [2011–12 season](#) winning both the [Spanish](#) and [European Super Cups](#) trophies.^{[94][95]} At the close of the year, he won the [FIFA Club World Cup](#) and earned the [Golden Ball](#) for a second time.^[96] For his efforts in 2011, he received the [FIFA Ballon d'Or](#), becoming only the fourth player in history to win the Ballon d'Or three times,^[97] and the inaugural [UEFA Best Player in Europe Award](#).^[98]

During the year 2012, Messi became the second player to be top scorer in four Champions League campaigns.^{[99][100]} Messi became the top goalscorer in Barcelona's history at 24 years old, overtaking the 57-year record of [César Rodríguez's](#) 232 goals with a hat-trick against [Granada](#).^[101] He finished the

"I feel sorry for those who want to compete for Messi's throne – it's impossible, this kid is unique."

– [Pep Guardiola](#) after Messi became Barcelona's all-time top scorer at the age of 24 in March 2012^[93]

season as league top scorer in Spain and Europe for a second time, with 50 goals, a La Liga record, while his [73 goals in all competitions](#) made him the single-season top scorer in the history of European club football excluding regional and local competitions.^{[102][103]} The team would also win the [Copa del Rey](#) that season, their 14th trophy under Guardiola, who resigned following the season after a four-year cycle of success.^[104]

2012–2014: Record-breaking year and *Messidependencia*

For the start of the [2012–13 season](#), Barcelona had virtually secured their La Liga title by the start of 2013.^[105] A double scored against [Real Betis](#) saw Messi becoming Barcelona's all-time top scorer in La Liga, and surpassed [Gerd Müller](#)'s record of most goals scored in a calendar year; Messi would score a record 91 goals in all competitions for Barcelona and Argentina throughout 2012.^{[106][107]} Messi again won the [FIFA Ballon d'Or](#), becoming the first player in history to win the Ballon d'Or four times.^{[107][108]} He signed a new contract committing himself to the club through 2018, and wore the captain's armband for the first time in a league match against [Rayo Vallecano](#).^{[109][110][111]} The team would win [La Liga](#) again that year, Messi's sixth, equalling Real Madrid's 100-point record of the previous season. With 60 goals in all competitions, including 46 goals in La Liga, he finished the campaign as league top scorer in Spain and Europe for the second consecutive year, becoming the first player in history to win the [European Golden Shoe](#) three times.^[112]

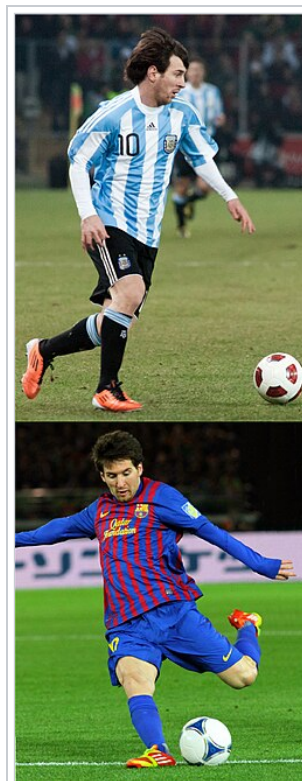
Messi's overall input into the team's attack had increased significantly. Whereas he contributed to 24% of the team's goals in their treble-winning campaign in 2008–09, this number rose to more than 40% by the end of the 2012–13 season.^[113] These statistics, as well as lopsided losses in the Champions League where Messi was unfit, gave credence to the notion of *Messidependencia*, Barcelona's perceived tactical and psychological dependence on their star player.^[114]

To offset the load on Messi, Barcelona would sign Brazilian forward [Neymar](#) from [Santos](#) before the [2013–14 season](#).^[115] The team would win the [Supercopa de España](#) at the beginning of the season.^[116] Messi finished the campaign with his worst output in five seasons, though he still managed to score 41 goals in all competitions.^[117] For the first time in five years, Barcelona ended the season without a major trophy.^[118]

2014–2017: Arrival of Luis Enrique and birth of MSN



Messi dribbling past [Patrice Evra](#) of [Juventus](#) during the [2015 UEFA](#)



Messi scored a record-breaking 91 goals with Argentina (above) and Barcelona (below) in 2012.

Barcelona hired coach [Luis Enrique](#) before the [2014–15 season](#), and would continue to aid Messi in the attack by signing Uruguayan forward [Luis Suárez](#), who had won the European Golden Shoe the year before at [Liverpool](#).^{[119][120]} Luis Enrique's system would feature quick transitions from defense to attack, led by the front three of Messi, Suárez and Neymar. The attacking trio, which colloquially became known as 'MSN', would break goalscoring records.^[121] A hat-trick scored against [Sevilla](#) earlier in the season would also make him the [all-time top scorer in La Liga](#), as he surpassed the 59-year record of 251 league goals held by

Champions League final.

Telmo Zarra.^[122] After securing the [La Liga title](#), the [Copa del Rey](#), and the [Champions League](#) that year, Messi helped Barcelona become the first

club to win the continental treble twice.^{[123][124]} He would record 58 goals, but combined with Neymar and Suárez, the attacking trio scored a total of 122 goals in all competitions that season, a record in Spanish football.^[125]

Messi opened the [2015–16 season](#) by helping Barcelona's win over Sevilla in the [UEFA Super Cup](#).^[126] Messi capped off the year by winning the [2015 FIFA Club World Cup final](#) over [River Plate](#) in [Yokohama](#), collecting his fifth club trophy of the calendar year.^[127] On 11 January 2016, Messi won the [FIFA Ballon d'Or](#) for a record fifth time in his career.^[128] He would end the season by winning [La Liga](#) as well as the [Copa del Rey](#) again.^[129] In total, Messi scored 41 goals, and Barcelona's attacking trio of him, Neymar and Suárez managed a Spanish record of 131 combined goals throughout the season, breaking the record they had set the previous season.^[130]

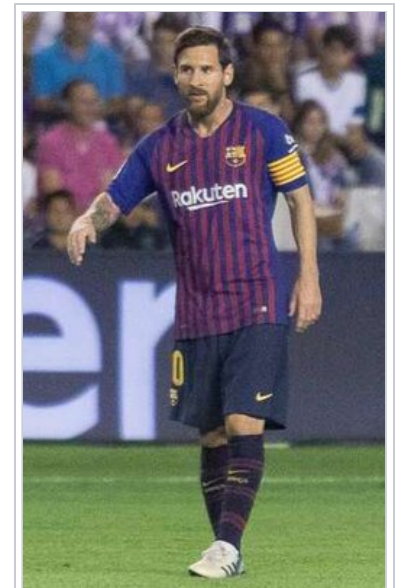
The [2016–17 season](#) would end with Messi winning the [Supercopa de España](#) and the [Copa del Rey](#).^{[131][132]} He would finish the season with 54 goals, while his 37 goals in La Liga saw him claim both the [Pichichi](#) and European Golden Boot Awards for the fourth time in his career.^[133] Messi, Neymar and Suárez would combine for 110 goals by season's end. Neymar would depart for [Paris Saint Germain](#) the next year, leaving the attacking trio with a combined total of 363 goals over the course of three seasons.^[134] Luis Enrique would also leave Barcelona at the end of the season after managing the club to a total of nine trophies during his three-year tenure.^[135]

2017–2021: Final years at Barcelona

Messi would sign a new deal with Barcelona on 25 November 2017, his ninth contract with the club, keeping him with the club through 2021.^[136] The [2017–18 season](#) saw Messi achieving the domestic double, winning [La Liga](#) and the [Copa del Rey](#) once again.^[137] He once again finished the season as the top scorer in La Liga, with 34 goals, which also saw him win his fifth European Golden Shoe award.^[138] With the departure of former captain [Andrés Iniesta](#) in May 2018, Messi was named the team's new captain for the [2018–19 season](#).^[139] He lifted his first trophy as Barcelona's captain, the [Supercopa de España](#), following a 2–1 victory over Sevilla. He helped Barcelona clinch the [La Liga title](#), his tenth but first as captain.^[140] With 36 goals in 34 appearances that season, he won his sixth league Golden Boot trophy, equalling Zarra as the player with the most top-scorer awards in La Liga.^{[141][142]} He also captured his sixth Golden Shoe award, and a record third consecutive award since the 2016–17 season.^[143]

Messi would win his sixth [Ballon d'Or](#), but the subsequent [2019–20 season](#) saw Barcelona go trophyless for the first time since 2007–08.^[144] Following a disappointing season, Barcelona announced that Messi sent the club "a document expressing his desire to leave", but Messi ultimately decided to fulfill the final year of his contract.^{[145][146]} The [2020–21 season](#) saw Messi surpass [Xavi](#)'s record to reach a club record of 768 appearances.^[147] He would lead the club to victory in the [2021 Copa del Rey final](#).^{[148][149]} His last two seasons with Barcelona saw him lead La Liga in goal scoring, giving him a record-breaking total of eight Pichichi trophies.^{[150][151]}

Messi became a free agent after his contract expired, with negotiations on a new deal complicated due to Barcelona's financial issues.^{[152][153]} Barcelona would eventually announce that Messi would not be staying at the



Messi, wearing the captain's armband, against [Real Valladolid](#) in 2018.

club, citing financial and structural obstacles posed by La Liga regulations as a reason for Messi's departure.^{[154][155]} In a tearful press conference held at the Camp Nou, Messi confirmed that he would be leaving Barcelona.^[156]

Paris Saint-Germain



Messi (middle) with PSG teammates [Kylian Mbappé](#) (left) and [Neymar](#).

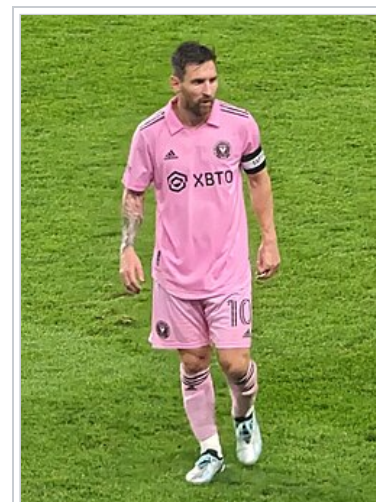
On 10 August 2021, Messi joined [Ligue 1](#) club [Paris Saint-Germain](#) (PSG), reuniting him with Neymar, for the [2021–22 season](#) on a two-year deal until June 2023 with an option for an extra year.^{[157][158]} Messi chose 30 as his squad number, the same he wore as a teenager when he made his senior debut for Barcelona.^[159] He would make his debut with the club against [Reims](#), made his first start and Champions League debut for the club against [Club Brugge](#), and made his home debut in a match against [Lyon](#).^{[160][161][162]} He scored his first goal for the club in a Champions League group stage win over former manager Pep Guardiola's [Manchester City](#).^[163] Having scored 40 goals at club and international level for the calendar year in addition to captaining Argentina to the [2021 Copa América](#), Messi received a record [seventh Ballon d'Or](#).^[164] He finished his debut season with PSG with 11 goals and 14 assists across all competitions, helping the club win their 10th [Ligue 1 title](#).^[165]

Beginning the [2022–23 season](#), Messi would win his second trophy with PSG in the [Trophée des Champions](#).^[166] A goal against [Nice](#) resulted in him surpassing Cristiano Ronaldo as the all-time highest goalscorer in European club football with 702 goals; during the match, he also achieved 1,000 career direct goal contributions at club level.^{[167][168]} By the end of the season, he had 21 goals across all competitors and the highest number of assists in the league with 16, which helped PSG clinch their 11th [Ligue 1 title](#) and his second in a row.^{[169][170][171]} Following the last game of the season, manager [Christophe Galtier](#) confirmed that it would be Messi's last for PSG, with the club confirming his departure two days later.^[172]

Inter Miami

[Major League Soccer](#) (MLS) club [Inter Miami CF](#) announced the signing of Messi on a two-and-a-half-year contract on 15 July 2023.^{[173][174]} Messi made his [2023](#) debut for the club in a [Leagues Cup](#) match against [Cruz Azul](#), scoring with a free-kick in stoppage time for a victory.^[175] [DeAndre Yedlin](#), the previous captain of Inter Miami, gave his armband to Messi, who took over as team captain.^[176] Messi's arrival in the US was praised as a revelation, on and off the pitch, and his presence was credited for helping to raise the profile of MLS within the US and abroad. According to [Goal](#), "Every game that he graces sparks a scramble for tickets, with plenty of A-list guests eager to watch him in action".^[177] The frenzy over his arrival was dubbed "Messimania", and Inter Miami's No. 10 Messi jersey became the best-selling jersey in the league, and nearly the world.^[178]

After scoring nine goals in his first six games for Miami, Messi led the team to the club's first-ever trophy, as it won the [Leagues Cup](#) against [Nashville SC](#).^[179] Messi



Messi with Inter Miami in the [2023 U.S. Open Cup](#).

made his MLS debut against the [New York Red Bulls](#).^[180] Miami would miss the playoffs, finishing 14th in the Eastern Conference, having gone winless in their last seven games.^[181] On 30 October 2023, following his World Cup win with Argentina and Ligue 1 trophy with PSG, Messi was awarded a record-extending [eighth Ballon d'Or](#).^[182] He was also named *[Time Athlete of the Year](#)*, the first footballer ever to win the award.^[183]

During the [2024 season](#), Messi broke the record for the most assists in a single MLS game with five assists, and broke the record for the most goal contributions in an MLS game with six, in a 6–2 win over the New York Red Bulls.^[184] On 2 October, Messi scored a brace in a 3–2 win over [Columbus Crew](#), clinching the [Supporters' Shield](#), his 46th trophy.^[185] In the final game of the regular season on 19 October against the [New England Revolution](#), Messi scored his first hat-trick for the club in a 6–2 victory. Inter Miami's victory over the Revolution also allowed the club to finish with 74 points throughout the regular season, a league record for MLS. He would finish the regular season with 20 goals and 16 assists in 19 matches.^[186] In doing so, he became Inter Miami's [all-time leading goalscorer](#).^[187]

Miami made its first postseason appearance in the [2024 MLS Cup playoffs](#) but were eliminated in the first round after losing two games against [Atlanta United FC](#). Messi would have his first postseason goal in the third game, a 3–2 loss.^[188] He would be named the [MLS Most Valuable Player](#) following the conclusion of the regular season.^[189]

During the 2025 season, Messi became the fastest person to reach 40 goals in league history.^[190] He was featured in a Superbowl ad by Apple TV for their exclusive MLS coverage. In April he was reported to be negotiating a one-year contract extension to the end of the 2026 season, after the opening of the new Miami stadium.^[190]

International career

Main article: [Career of Lionel Messi § International career](#)

As a dual Argentine-Spanish national, Messi was eligible to play for the national team of both countries.^[191] He debuted for Argentina in 2004 for [Argentina's U20 team](#) against [Paraguay](#), and was subsequently included in the squad for the [2005 South American U-20 Championship](#), where they would finish third.^[192] Messi would then lead the team to victory in the [2005 FIFA World Youth Championship](#), his first success with Argentina. Finishing the tournament with six goals and two assists, he would also win the [Golden Ball](#).^{[193][194][195]}



Messi evades Brazil's [Marcelo](#) in the semi-final of the [2008 Summer Olympics](#).

Messi would make his debut with the [senior national team](#) in 2005, at age 18, coming off the bench in a friendly against [Hungary](#).^[196] Messi would have his first start in 2006 against [Peru](#), and would score his first international goal in a friendly against [Croatia](#).^{[197][198]} His World Cup debut came in the [2006 FIFA World Cup](#) as a substitute in the 74th minute against [Serbia and Montenegro](#), assisting one goal and scoring the final one in their victory. This made him the youngest player to represent and score for Argentina in the World Cup.^[199] He would represent Argentina again for the [2007 Copa América](#), where they would ultimately lose in the [final](#). Messi was named the best young player of the tournament, having scored two goals and provided one assist.^[200] The [2008 Summer](#)

[Olympics](#) would mark another major achievement with his country, as he led [Argentina's U23 team](#) to claim the [Olympic gold medal](#) over [Nigeria](#). Messi registered two goals and three assists throughout, and was singled out by FIFA as the stand-out player from the tournament's best team.^[201]

With the international retirement of [Juan Román Riquelme](#), Messi was given Argentina's number 10 shirt.^[202] During a [2010 FIFA World Cup](#) group stage match against [Greece](#), where a majority of the starters rested due to a secured place in the knockout rounds, Messi would wear the captain's armband for the first time.^[203] Argentina were ultimately eliminated in the quarterfinals against [Germany](#) during that tournament, but Messi was identified as one of the tournament's 10 best players due to his pace and creativity, despite failing to register a single goal and only having one assist.^[204] Ahead of the [2011 Copa América](#), Argentina began building their team around Messi.^[205] However, Messi would again be goalless during the tournament but had three assists. The team would ultimately lose to [Uruguay](#) in penalties during the quarter-finals.^[206]



Messi in his number 10 shirt captaining Argentina in 2012.



Messi against [Germany](#) in the [2014 FIFA World Cup final](#).

Following their unsuccessful performance, a 24-year-old Messi would be awarded the captaincy of the squad.^[207] The next several years saw many frustrations for Messi due to his inability to lead Argentina to win an international trophy. During the [2014 FIFA World Cup](#), Messi and Argentina lost to Germany in the [final](#), though Messi was awarded the [Golden Ball](#) as the best player of the tournament regardless due to his overall performance with four goals and an assist.^{[208][209]} Argentina would lose to [Chile](#) on penalties in the [2015 Copa América final](#) the next year. At the close of the tournament, Messi was reportedly selected to receive the [Golden Ball](#) award, having scored one goal and provided three assists, but he rejected the honour.^[210] In the 2016 [Copa América Centenario](#) semi-final against the [United States](#), a goal from Messi would put him ahead of [Gabriel Batistuta](#) as [Argentina's all-time leading goalscorer](#) in international matches.^[211] However, Argentina would again fall to Chile on penalties in the [final](#).^[212] Messi would have five goals and four assists throughout the tournament.^[213]

Losing three consecutive finals in three consecutive years caused Messi to retire from international football, but a nationwide campaign in Argentina helped convince him to reverse his decision.^{[212][214]} He would return to the national team to lead them to the [2018 FIFA World Cup](#). Argentina were in jeopardy of missing the tournament on the last game of the [qualifiers](#) against [Ecuador](#), but a hat-trick from Messi dramatically secured their entry.^[215] They would go on to lose to [France](#) in the Round of 16 during the World Cup, with Messi having one goal and two assists in the tournament.^[216] The next year, Messi would again represent Argentina in the [2019 Copa América](#), where he registered only a single goal and assist. They would lose to hosts [Brazil](#) in the semi-final but ended with a third-place finish after defeating Chile.^[217] Despite not winning the tournament, this victory would mark the beginning of a 36-game unbeaten streak for Argentina that would last for over three years.^[218]

Messi would finally end Argentina's 28-year trophy drought in the [2021 Copa América](#), as they had not won an international tournament since [1993](#).^[219] During a group stage match against [Bolivia](#), he surpassed [Javier](#)

[Mascherano](#) to become [Argentina's most-capped player](#).^[220] Argentina defeated Brazil in the [final](#), and Messi was named the player of the tournament having been directly involved in nine out of the 12 goals scored by Argentina, scoring four of them and assisting five.^[219] He captained Argentina to win another international trophy in the [2022 Finalissima](#) against [UEFA Euro 2020](#) winners [Italy](#), where he was named player of the match after providing two assists.^[221] At the [2022 FIFA World Cup](#), Messi led Argentina to its first World Cup victory in 36 years, scoring twice in the [final](#) to defeat France.^[222] Having scored seven goals and assisting three during the tournament, Messi would again win the Golden Ball, becoming the first player to win it twice.^[223] His appearance in the final also set new records for the most appearances (26) and direct goal contributions (21 – 13 goals and 8 assists) at the World Cup.^[224]



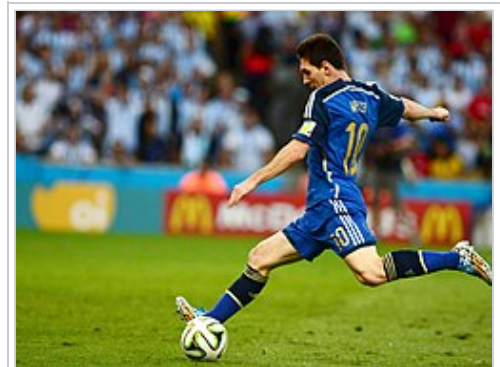
Messi facing off against [Érick Gutiérrez](#) of [Mexico](#) in the [2022 FIFA World Cup](#) group stage.

A hat-trick in a 2023 friendly against [Curaçao](#) saw Messi reach 100 international goals, the third player and the first South American in history to achieve this milestone.^[225] Later that year, a goal against Peru resulted in Messi becoming the all-time top goalscorer in [CONMEBOL](#) World Cup qualifiers.^[226] During the [2024 Copa América](#) semi-final against [Canada](#), Messi scored his first and only goal of the tournament which also made him the [second-highest international goalscorer](#) of all time.^[227] Argentina eventually won the [final](#) against [Colombia](#) for their second consecutive Copa América title, with Messi contributing one goal and assist overall while also setting a new record for most appearances (39) at Copa América.^[228]

Player profile

Style of play

Due to his short stature, Messi has a lower centre of gravity than taller players, which gives him greater agility, allowing him to change direction more quickly and evade opposing tackles;^{[229][230]} this has led the Spanish media to dub him ***La Pulga Atómica*** ("The Atomic Flea").^{[231][232][233]} Despite being physically unimposing, he possesses significant upper-body strength, which, combined with his low centre of gravity and resulting balance, aids him in withstanding physical challenges from opponents; he has consequently been noted for his lack of [diving](#) in a sport rife with playacting.^{[28][230][234]} His short, strong legs allow him to excel in short bursts of acceleration while his quick feet enable him to retain control of the ball when [dribbling](#) at speed.^[235] His former Barcelona manager [Pep Guardiola](#) once stated, "Messi is the only player that runs faster with the ball than he does without it."^[236] Although he has improved his ability with his weaker foot since his mid-20s, Messi is predominantly a left-footed player; with the outside of his left foot, he usually begins dribbling runs, while he uses the inside of his foot to finish and provide passes and assists.^{[237][238]}



Messi prepares to shoot with his dominant left foot in the [2014 FIFA World Cup](#) final.

A prolific goalscorer, Messi is known for his finishing, positioning, quick reactions, and ability to make attacking runs to beat the defensive line. He also functions in a [playmaking](#) role, courtesy of his vision and range of

passing.^[239] He has often been described as a magician; a conjurer, creating goals and opportunities where seemingly none exist.^{[240][241][242]} Moreover, he is an accurate [free kick](#) and [penalty kick](#) taker.^{[230][243]} As of September 2023, Messi ranks fifth all time in goals scored from direct free kicks with 65,^[244] the most among active players.^[245] He also has a penchant for scoring from [chips](#).^[246]



Messi's dribbling abilities allow him to weave past several defenders and orchestrate attacking plays.

Messi's pace and technical ability enable him to undertake individual dribbling runs towards goal, in particular during counterattacks, usually starting from the halfway line or the right side of the pitch.^{[234][243][247]} He is widely considered to be one of the greatest dribblers of all time.^{[248][249]} With regard to this ability, his former Argentina manager [Diego Maradona](#) has said of him, "The ball stays glued to his foot; I've seen great players in my career, but I've never seen anyone with Messi's ball control."^[238] Beyond his individual qualities, he is also a well-rounded, hard-working team player, known for his creative combinations, in particular with former Barcelona midfielders [Xavi](#) and [Andrés Iniesta](#).^{[229][230]}

As his career advanced, and his athleticism and tendency to dribble diminished slightly with age, Messi began to dictate play in [deeper areas of the pitch](#) and developed into one of the best passers and playmakers in football history.^{[250][251][252]} His work-rate off the ball and defensive responsibilities also decreased as his career progressed; by covering less ground on the pitch, and instead conserving his energy for short bursts of speed, he was able to improve his efficiency, movement, and positional play, and was also able to avoid muscular injuries, despite often playing a large number of matches throughout a particular season on a consistent basis. Indeed, while he was injury-prone in his early career, he was later able to improve his injury record by running less off the ball, and by adopting a stricter diet, training regime, and sleep schedule.^[253]

Tactical positioning

Tactically, Messi plays in a free attacking role; a versatile player, he is capable of attacking on either wing or through the centre of the pitch. His favoured position in childhood was the playmaker behind two strikers, known as the *enganche* in Argentine football, but he began his career in Spain as a [left-winger](#) or [left-sided forward](#).^[254] Upon his first-team debut, he was moved onto the right wing by manager [Frank Rijkaard](#); from this position, he could more easily cut through the defence into the middle of the pitch and [curl](#) shots on goal with his left foot, rather than predominantly [cross](#) balls for teammates.^[236] Under Guardiola and subsequent managers, he most often played in a [false nine](#) role; positioned as a [centre-forward](#) or lone [striker](#), he would roam the centre, often moving deep into midfield and drawing defenders with him, in order to create and exploit spaces for passes, other teammates' attacking runs off the ball, Messi's own dribbling runs, or combinations with Xavi and Iniesta.^[38]

Under the stewardship of [Luis Enrique](#), Messi initially returned to playing in the right-sided position that characterised much of his early career in the manager's 4–3–3 formation,^{[255][256]} while he was increasingly deployed in a deeper, free playmaking



A versatile forward, Messi often plays as a classic [number 10](#).

role in later seasons.^{[257][258]} Under manager [Ernesto Valverde](#), Messi played in a variety of roles. While he occasionally continued to be deployed in a deeper role, from which he could make runs from behind into the box,^[259] or even on the right wing^[260] or as a false nine,^{[261][262]} he was also used in a more offensive, central role in a 4–2–3–1,^[258] or as a second striker in a 4–4–2 formation, where he was once again given the licence to drop deep, link-up with midfielders, orchestrate his team's attacking plays, and create chances for his attacking partner [Luis Suárez](#).^{[263][264]} With the Argentina national team, Messi has similarly played anywhere along the frontline. Under various managers, he has been employed on the right wing, as a false nine, as an out-and-out striker, in a supporting role alongside another forward, or in a deeper, free creative role as a classic number 10 playmaker or [attacking midfielder](#) behind the strikers.^{[265][266]}

Reception

Messi is widely regarded as one of the two best players of his generation, alongside Portuguese forward [Cristiano Ronaldo](#).^[267] He is also considered one of the greatest footballers in the history of the sport.^[268]

A prodigious talent as a teenager, Messi established himself among the world's best players before age 20.^[269] Shortly after teammate [Ronaldinho](#) won the [2005 Ballon d'Or](#), he commented, "I'm not even the best at Barça" in reference to his 18-year-old protégé.^[270] Four years later, after Messi won his first [Ballon d'Or](#) by a record margin,^[81] the public debate regarding his qualities as a player moved beyond his status in contemporary football to the possibility that he was one of the greatest players in history.^{[24][234][271]} An early proponent was his then-[Barcelona](#) manager [Pep Guardiola](#), who, as early as August 2009, declared Messi to be the best player he had ever seen.^[272] In the following years, this opinion gained greater acceptance among pundits, managers, former and current players.^{[92][273]} By the end of Barça's second treble-winning season, the view of Messi as one of the greatest footballers of all time had become the apparent view among many fans and pundits in continental Europe.^{[274][275]}

Messi would receive dismissals by critics throughout his career based on the fact that he had not won an international tournament at senior level with Argentina.^{[276][277][278]} However, his subsequent victories in the [2021 Copa América](#) and the [2022 FIFA World Cup](#) resulted in him finally winning every top tier trophy at both the club and country levels, an achievement that many pundits felt cemented Messi's legacy.^[268]

Comparisons with Cristiano Ronaldo

Main article: [Messi–Ronaldo rivalry](#)

Among his contemporary peers, Messi is most often compared and contrasted with Cristiano Ronaldo, who many consider his [career rival](#).^[267] Both achieved numerous individual accolades, won dozens of trophies for both club and country, and are the two [leading goal scorers in history](#). Although Messi has at times denied any rivalry,^{[279][280]} they are widely believed to push one another in their aim to be the best player in the world.^[281] Pundits have compared the ongoing rivalry to [past sports rivalries](#) like the [Muhammad Ali–Joe Frazier](#) rivalry in boxing, the [Prost–Senna rivalry](#) in motorsport, and the tennis rivalries between [Federer–Nadal](#) and [Borg–McEnroe](#).^[282]

Fans and pundits alike regularly argue the individual merits of both players.^{[281][283]} Messi is lauded for his combination of dribbling, playmaking, passing and goalscoring, while Ronaldo has received praise for his

exceptional speed and athleticism, goalscoring skills, and performance under pressure.^{[284][285]} Beyond their playing styles, the debate also revolves around their differing physiques – Ronaldo is 1.87 m (6 ft 1½ in) with a muscular build, compared to Messi's smaller size – and contrasting public personalities with Ronaldo's self-confidence and theatrics a foil to Messi's humility.^[286] Regarding individual achievements, Messi has won eight Ballons d'Or to Ronaldo's five,^[287] eight [FIFA World's Best Player](#) awards to Ronaldo's five, and six [European Golden Shoes](#) to Ronaldo's four.^[288] Off the pitch, Ronaldo is his direct competitor in terms of salary, sponsorships, and social media fanbase.^[289]



Messi has been compared with [Cristiano Ronaldo](#) (left) throughout much of their careers.

Messi's [head-to-head record](#) against teams that feature Ronaldo consists of 15 wins, 9 draws, and 10 losses in competitive club matches, one win and loss each in international friendlies, and one win in a club friendly. The first competitive matchup between the two occurred in 2008, when Ronaldo's [Manchester United](#) were drawn to play Messi's Barcelona in the [2007–08 UEFA Champions League semi-finals](#), where Ronaldo and Manchester United would eventually advance 1–0 on aggregate, and go on to win the [final](#).^[290] The two players and their teams would meet again in the next year's Champions League, this time in [the final](#), with Messi and Barcelona emerging as the victors after a 2–0 result.^[291] After this, Ronaldo would transfer to [Real Madrid](#), the main rivals of Barcelona, and from 2009–10 to 2017–18, Messi faced Ronaldo at least twice every season in [El Clásico](#), which ranks among the world's most viewed annual sports events.^{[292][289]} Ronaldo's would then transfer to [Juventus](#) in the summer of 2018; their final matchup in a competitive match would occur during a [2020–21 UEFA Champions League group stage match](#), where Ronaldo's two goals from the penalty spot helped Juventus to a 3–0 victory against Messi's Barcelona.^[293] After Ronaldo left Real Madrid for Juventus, Messi stated: "I miss Cristiano. Although it was a bit difficult to see him win trophies, he gave [La Liga](#) prestige."^[294]

Following Messi leading Argentina to victory in the 2022 World Cup, a number of football critics, commentators, and players have opined that Messi settled the debate between the two players.^{[295][296]} Ronaldo himself declared a year later that his rivalry with Messi was over and "gone", after 36 official fixtures and 15 years of "sharing the stage".^[297]

Comparisons with Diego Maradona

Main article: [New Maradona](#)

"I have seen the player who will inherit my place in Argentinian football and his name is Messi."

– [Diego Maradona](#) hailing the 18-year-old Messi as his [successor](#) in February 2006.^[298]

Throughout his career, Messi has been compared with his compatriot [Diego Maradona](#), who was also considered the best player of his generation and one of greatest in the history of the sport.^{[299][300]} This was due to their short statures, their similar playing styles as diminutive, left-footed [playmakers](#), and the fact that they both came from Argentina.^[301] Initially, Messi was merely one of many young Argentine players to receive the "[New Maradona](#)" moniker, but as his career progressed, Messi proved his similarity beyond all previous contenders, establishing himself as the best player Argentina had produced since Maradona.^{[35][302]} Even when Messi was 18 years old, Maradona called him the best player in the world and hailed him as his successor.^[298] Messi and Maradona would work together as player

and manager for Argentina's [national side](#) from 2008 through the [2010 FIFA World Cup](#), the latter thoroughly impressed with the former's skills.^[303] It was during this period that Messi was given Argentina's number 10 shirt that Maradona famously wore. Maradona gave Messi his blessing, telling him: "the No 10 is yours. There's nobody better than you to wear it."^[202]

During the early and middle parts of his career, Messi was generally held in lesser esteem than Maradona in Argentine society. Part of this had to do with Messi's lack of tournament success and perceived uneven output with the national team during this period – Maradona had famously led Argentina to victory in the [1986 FIFA World Cup](#) with a dominant overall performance, which set expectations for Messi to do the same.^{[276][299][304]} Also unlike Maradona, Messi never played in the

[Argentine Primera División](#), therefore depriving his countrymen a chance to watch him develop and prove himself, and through no fault of his own would do this overseas in [La Liga](#) instead.^{[28][304]} Argentines also identified more with the fiery, extroverted and controversial Maradona who came from the slums, character traits that they felt aligned with their

national values, as opposed to the reserved, introverted and unassuming Messi who had a comparably unremarkable upbringing in Rosario.^{[278][304][305]} Several pundits, footballing figures, and Maradona himself would point to this temperament to question Messi's leadership capabilities for the national team.^{[276][306][307]}

Furthermore, Messi's lack of outward passion for the *Albiceleste* shirt, early tendency not to sing the national anthem, and disinclination to emotional displays have in the past led to the false perception that he felt more Catalan rather than truly Argentine.^{[206][308]} However, despite having lived in Barcelona since age 13, Messi rejected the option of representing [Spain](#) internationally, saying: "Argentina is my country, my family, my way of expressing myself. I would change all my records to make the people in my country happy."^[309]

Football journalist [Tim Vickery](#) stated the perception of Messi among Argentines changed in 2019, with Messi making a conscious effort to become "more one of the group, more Argentine".^[308] Other pundits noted that Messi had grown more assertive as a leader during the [2019 Copa América](#) by becoming more vocal with his teammates both on and off the pitch, finally singing the national anthem with the team before matches, and speaking with journalists at length after matches, the latter of which he rarely did for Barcelona.^[310] Following the 2022 World Cup win for Messi and Argentina, Vickery felt that Messi would now be held in the same esteem by his compatriots as Maradona.^[308] Former footballer turned journalist [Jorge Valdano](#) said he saw a "Maradonian" edge to

Messi's performances during the tournament, while compatriot [Osvaldo Ardiles](#) mentioned that Messi's provoking actions against the [Netherlands side](#) during the [quarter-final](#) were "more of a Maradona reaction," further endearing Messi to his countrymen.^{[311][312]} Messi himself later remarked that the World Cup victory "won over all the people of Argentina. Today 95% or 100% of Argentines love me and that's a beautiful feeling."^[313]



Due to their similar size and style of play, Messi was constantly compared with his compatriot [Diego Maradona](#) by pundits and his countrymen.



A mural featuring both Maradona and Messi following Argentina's World Cup win in [2022](#).

In popular culture

Popularity

Messi was among the [Time 100](#), an annual list of the world's most influential people, in 2011, 2012 and 2023.^{[314][315][316]} According to a 2014 survey in 15 international markets, Messi was familiar to 87% of respondents around the world, of whom 78% perceived him favourably, making him the second-most recognised player globally, behind Cristiano Ronaldo, and the most likable of all contemporary players.^{[317][318]} [World Press Photo](#) selected "The Final Game", a photo of Messi facing the [World Cup trophy](#) after Argentina's final defeat to Germany, as the best sports image of 2014.^[319] On his economic impact on the city in which he plays, [Terry Gibson](#) called him a "tourist attraction".^[320]

His fanbase on [Facebook](#) is among the largest of public figures: within seven hours of its launch in April 2011, Messi's Facebook page had nearly seven million followers, and by July 2023 he had [over 114 million followers](#), the second highest for a sports person after Ronaldo.^{[321][322]} He has over 500 million [Instagram](#) followers, the [second highest for an individual](#) and sports person after Ronaldo.^[323] His World Cup celebration post from 18 December 2022 is the [most liked post on Instagram](#) with over 75 million likes.^[324]

On 20 March 2023, during a return to Buenos Aires following his World Cup victory, Messi was mobbed by hundreds of adoring fans when he and his family were out to dinner. When news spread where Messi and his family were, the restaurant was soon surrounded by locals hoping to get a glimpse of their World Cup-winning captain. Police assistance would be needed to get Messi back to his car in the early hours of the morning.^[325] In April 2023, Messi was featured in the 200 year old [Thrissur Pooram](#) festival in [Kerala](#), India.^[326] During the festival, umbrellas carrying the illuminated cut outs of Messi holding the World Cup trophy were displayed on the top of caparisoned elephants during the Kudamattam ceremony.^[327] In December 2023, a set of shirts Messi had worn during the 2022 World Cup was sold at auction for \$7.8 million.^[328]

During an [exhibition match](#) on 4 February 2024 in which Inter Miami faced off against the [Hong Kong League](#) players at [Hong Kong Stadium](#), Messi remained on the bench the entire game, causing massive backlash in Hong Kong and China as a result.^[329] A Messi commercial was taken off air in those regions,^[330] while others remained despite pressure from Chinese social-media users.^{[331][332][333]} Furthermore, the [Chinese Football Association](#) temporarily halted its partnership with the [Argentine Football Association](#) over the incident on 8 February.^[334]

Wealth and sponsorships

Messi was the world's highest-paid footballer for five years out of six between 2009 and 2014; he was the first player to exceed the €40 million benchmark, with earnings of €41 million in 2013, and the €50–€60 million points, with income of €65 million in 2014.^{[335][336]} Messi was second on [Forbes](#) list of the world's highest-paid athletes, after Cristiano Ronaldo, with income of \$81 million from salary and endorsements in 2015–16.^[337] In 2018, he was the first player to exceed the €100 million benchmark for a calendar year, with earnings of €126 million (\$154 million) in combined income from salaries, bonuses and endorsements.^[338] [Forbes](#) ranked him the [world's highest-paid athlete](#) in 2019.^[339] From 2008, he was Barcelona's highest-paid player, receiving a salary that increased incrementally from €7.8 million to €13 million over the next five years.^{[340][341][109]} Signing a new



Messi's success on the pitch earned him several lucrative endorsement deals along with widespread recognition and popularity.

contract in 2017, he earned \$667,000 per week in wages, and Barcelona paid him \$60 million as a signing on bonus.^[342] His buyout clause was set at \$835 million (€700 million).^[342] In 2020, Messi became the second footballer, as well as the second athlete in a team sport, after Ronaldo, to surpass \$1 billion in earnings during their careers.^[343]



Messi's Argentina jersey, supplied by Adidas, was sold out worldwide during the 2022 World Cup.^[344]

In addition to salary and bonuses, much of Messi's income derives from endorsements; *SportsPro* has consequently cited him as one of the world's most marketable athletes every year since their research began in 2010.^[345] His main sponsor since 2006 is *Adidas*. As Barcelona's leading youth prospect, he was signed with *Nike* since age 14, but transferred to Adidas after they successfully challenged their rival's claim to his image rights in court.^[346] Messi established himself as their leading brand endorser,^[289] from 2008, he had a long-running signature collection of Adidas F50 boots, and in 2015, became the first footballer to receive his own sub-brand of Adidas boots, the Adidas Messi.^{[347][348]} Since 2017, he has worn the latest version of the *Adidas Nemeziz*.^[349] In 2015, a

Barcelona jersey with Messi's name and number was the best-selling replica jersey worldwide.^[350] At the 2022 World Cup, Adidas sold out Messi's No. 10 Argentina jersey worldwide.^[344]

As a commercial entity, Messi's brand has been based exclusively on his talents and achievements as a player, in contrast to arguably more glamorous players like Ronaldo and *David Beckham*. At the start of his career, he thus mainly held sponsorship contracts with companies that employ sports-oriented marketing, such as Adidas, Pepsi, and *Konami*.^{[352][353]} From 2010, concurrently with increased achievements as a player, his marketing appeal widened, leading to long-term endorsement deals with luxury brands *Dolce & Gabbana* and *Audemars Piguet*.^{[352][354]} Messi is a global brand ambassador for *Gillette*, *Turkish Airlines*, *Ooredoo*, and *Tata Motors*, among other companies.^{[355][356][357][358]} Messi was the face of Konami's video game series *Pro Evolution Soccer*, appearing on the covers of *PES 2009*, *PES 2010*, *PES 2011* and *PES 2020*. He subsequently signed with rival company *EA Sports* to become the face of their series *FIFA* and appeared on consecutive covers from *FIFA 13* to *FIFA 16*.^{[359][360]}



After *blessing himself*, Messi often celebrates a goal by pointing a finger on each hand towards the sky in dedication to his late grandmother.^[351] His goal celebration features in the *FIFA* video game series.

In 2013, a Turkish Airlines advertisement starring Messi, in which he engages in a *selfie* competition with *Kobe Bryant*, was the most-watched ad on *YouTube* in 2013, receiving 137 million views, and was voted the best advertisement of the 2005–15 decade to commemorate YouTube's founding.^{[361][362]} In June 2021, Messi signed a five-year deal to become an ambassador for the *Hard Rock Cafe* brand. He stated, "sports and music are an integral part of my life. It is an honor to be the first athlete to partner with a brand who has a history of teaming with music legends."^[363]

In May 2022, Messi was unveiled as *Saudi Arabia's tourism* ambassador. Due to *Saudi Arabia's* poor human rights record, Messi was condemned for the role which was viewed as an attempt of Saudi *sportswashing*.^{[364][365]}

Philanthropy

Throughout his career, Messi has been involved in charitable efforts aimed at vulnerable children, a commitment that stems in part from the medical difficulties he faced in his own childhood. Since 2004, he has contributed his time and finances to the [United Nations Children's Fund](#) (UNICEF), an organisation with which Barcelona also have a strong association.^{[366][367]} Messi has served as a [UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador](#) since his appointment in March 2010, completing his first field mission for the organisation four months later as he travelled to Haiti to bring public awareness to the plight of the country's children in the wake of the [2010 Haiti earthquake](#). He has since participated in UNICEF campaigns targeting [HIV prevention](#), education, and the social inclusion of disabled children.^[368] To celebrate his son's first birthday, in November 2013, Messi and Thiago were part of a publicity campaign to raise awareness of mortality rates among disadvantaged children.^[369]



Messi (pictured in 2007) has worked with UNICEF since 2004 and has served as a [UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador](#) since 2010.

In addition to his work with UNICEF, Messi founded his own charitable organisation, the Leo Messi Foundation, which supports access to health care, education, and sport for children.^[370] It was established in 2007 following a visit Messi paid to a hospital for terminally ill children in [Boston](#), an experience that resonated with him to the point that he decided to reinvest part of his earnings into society.^[371] Through his foundation, Messi has awarded research grants, financed medical training, and invested in the development of medical centres and projects in Argentina, Spain, and elsewhere in the world.^{[371][372]} In addition to his own fundraising activities, such as his global "Messi and Friends" football matches, his foundation receives financial support from various companies to which he has assigned his name in endorsement agreements, with Adidas as their main sponsor.^{[373][374]} A gold replica of his left foot, weighing 25 kg (55 lb) and valued at \$5.3 million, went on sale in Japan in 2013 to raise funds for victims of the [2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami](#).^[375]

Messi has also invested in youth football in Argentina: he financially supports Sarmiento, a football club based in the Rosario neighbourhood where he was born, committing in 2013 to the refurbishment of their facilities and the installation of all-weather pitches, and funds the management of several youth players at Newell's Old Boys and rival club [Rosario Central](#), as well as at [River Plate](#) and [Boca Juniors](#) in Buenos Aires.^[371] At Newell's Old Boys, his boyhood club, he funded the 2012 construction of a new gymnasium and a dormitory inside the club's [stadium](#) for their youth academy. His former youth coach at Newell's, Ernesto Vecchio, is employed by the Leo Messi Foundation as a talent scout for young players.^[28] On 7 June 2016, Messi won a libel case against [La Razón newspaper](#) and was awarded €65,000 in damages, which he donated to the charity [Médecins Sans Frontières](#).^[376] Messi made a donation worth €1 million (\$1.1 million) to fight the [spread of coronavirus](#).^[377] This was split between Clinic Barcelona in Barcelona and his native Argentina.^[378] In addition to this, Messi along with his fellow FC Barcelona teammates announced he would be taking a 70% cut in salaries during the 2020 coronavirus emergency, and contribute further to the club to provide fully to salaries of all the clubs employees.^[379]

In November 2016, with the [Argentine Football Association](#) being run by a FIFA committee for emergency due to an economic crisis, it was reported that three of the national team's security staff told Messi that they had not received their salaries for six months. He stepped in and paid the salaries of the three members.^{[380][381]} In

February 2021, Messi donated to the [Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya](#) his Adidas shoes which he wore when he scored his 644th goal for Barcelona and broke [Pelé](#)'s record for most goals scored for a single club; the shoes were later auctioned off in April by the museum for charity to help children with cancer and were sold for £125,000.^[382]

In advance of the [2021 Copa América](#), Messi donated three signed shirts to the Chinese pharmaceutical firm [Sinovac Biotech](#) – whose directors spoke of their admiration for Messi – in order to secure 50,000 doses of Sinovac's [COVID-19 vaccine](#), [CoronaVac](#), in the hope of vaccinating all of South America's football players.^[383] A deal brokered by Uruguay's president [Luis Lacalle Pou](#), the plan to prioritise football players caused some controversy given widespread vaccine scarcity in the region, with the Mayor of [Canelones Yamandú Orsi](#) remarking that "Just as the president manifested cooperation with CONMEBOL to vaccinate for the Copa América, he could just as well have the same consideration for Canelones".^[383]

In January 2025, Messi was presented with the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), the highest civilian award of the United States, by President [Joe Biden](#) for his contributions in supporting healthcare and education programs for children around the world.^[384] He would be unable to attend the ceremony due to scheduling conflicts, but sent a letter expressing his appreciation for the honor and his hopes of meeting President Biden at a later date.^[385]

Public art

[Street art](#) and public [murals](#) depicting Messi are regularly painted around the world.^{[386][387]} One prominent artwork that went viral is the [Sistine Chapel of Football](#), a parody of [Michelangelo's](#) [The Creation of Adam](#) that features both Messi and [Diego Maradona](#), along with several other prominent Argentine footballers. The work is exhibited at the Sportivo Pereyra club from [Barracas](#) in [Buenos Aires](#).^[388]

Several public sculptures with Messi's likeness have been erected. [Madame Tussauds](#) unveiled their first wax sculpture of Messi at [Wembley Stadium](#) in 2012.^[389] After the announcement of his first retirement from the international team in June 2016, a bronze statue of Messi was erected in [Buenos Aires](#) days later in an attempt to convince him to return.^[390] A life-sized statue of Messi holding the World Cup trophy was unveiled outside the [CONMEBOL](#) headquarters in [Luque](#), [Paraguay](#) in March 2023, a few months after Argentina's World Cup win. The statue would stand alongside those of [Pelé](#) and Maradona.^[391]



One of many [street art](#) displays depicting Messi.

Media

[Messi](#), a documentary by filmmaker [Álex de la Iglesia](#), premiered at the [71st Venice International Film Festival](#) in August 2014.^[392] [Messi's World Cup: The Rise of a Legend](#), a biographical docuseries focusing on Messi's career, his highs and lows with the Argentina national football team, and their eventual success at the 2022 FIFA World Cup, aired on [Apple TV+](#) on 21 February 2024.^[393]

Business ventures

On 4 June 2024, Messi announced the release of [Más+](#), an American brand of [sports](#) and [energy drinks](#).^[394] Messi created the drink because he couldn't find a flavorful and healthy hydration option that suited his needs.^[395] The drink was teased to debut in [Miami](#), Florida, on 13 June 2024. It was released in [Publix](#) and [Walmart](#) stores and made available for delivery on [Gopuff](#) in [South Florida](#) the following day.^[394] Más+ is affiliated with [White Claw Hard Seltzer](#) founder Mark Anthony.^[396]

Later that year, on 19 September 2024, Messi announced that he would be launching a production company called 525 Rosario, named after his hometown. Headquartered in Miami and [Los Angeles](#), the company was created to produce film, sporting events and branded commercials for athletes worldwide. It would be a joint venture with Smuggler Entertainment, who co-produced *Messi's World Cup: The Rise of a Legend* earlier in 2024.^[397]

Personal life

Family and relationships

Since 2008, Messi has been in a relationship with [Antonela Rocuzzo](#), who he eventually married on 30 June 2017 in their hometown of [Rosario](#).^{[398][399]} He has known Rocuzzo since he was five years old, as she is the cousin of his childhood best friend, [Lucas Scaglia](#), who is also a football player.^[400] After keeping their relationship private for a year, Messi first confirmed their romance in an interview in January 2009, before going public a month later during a carnival in [Sitges](#) after the [Barcelona–Espanyol derby](#).^[401]

Messi and Rocuzzo have three sons. To celebrate his partner's first pregnancy, Messi placed the ball under his shirt after scoring in Argentina's 4–0 win against Ecuador on 2 June 2012, before confirming the pregnancy in an interview two weeks later.^[402] Thiago was born in Barcelona on 2 November 2012.^[403] In April 2015, Messi confirmed that they were expecting another child.^[404] In October 2017, his wife announced they were expecting their third child.^[405] Messi and his family are [Catholic](#).^[406]

Messi enjoys a close relationship with his immediate family members, particularly his mother, Celia, whose face he has tattooed on his left shoulder. His professional affairs are largely run as a family business: his father, Jorge, has been his agent since he was 14, and his oldest brother, Rodrigo, handles his daily schedule and publicity. His mother and other brother, Matías, manage his charitable organization, the Leo Messi Foundation, and take care of personal and professional matters in Rosario.^[407]

Since leaving for Spain aged 13, Messi has maintained close ties to his hometown of Rosario, even preserving his distinct [Rosarino accent](#). He has kept ownership of his family's old house, although it has long stood empty; he maintains a penthouse apartment in an exclusive residential building for his mother, as well as a family compound just outside the city. Once when he was in training with the national team in Buenos Aires, he made a three-hour trip by car to Rosario immediately after practice to have dinner with his family, spent the night with them, and returned to Buenos Aires the next day in time for practice. Messi keeps in daily contact via phone and text with a small group of confidants in Rosario, most of whom were fellow members of "The Machine of '87" at Newell's Old Boys. He was on bad terms with the club after his transfer to Barcelona, but by 2012 their public feud had ended, with Newell's embracing their ties with Messi, even issuing a club membership card to his newborn son.^{[28][371][408]} Messi has long planned to return to Rosario to end his playing career at Newell's.^[409] Messi holds triple citizenship, as he is a citizen of Argentina, Italy, and Spain.^[410]

Tax fraud

Messi's financial affairs came under investigation in 2013 for suspected [tax evasion](#). Offshore companies in [tax havens](#) Uruguay and [Belize](#) were used to evade €4.1 million in taxes related to sponsorship earnings between 2007 and 2009. An unrelated [shell company](#) in Panama set up in 2012 was subsequently identified as belonging to the Messis in the [Panama Papers](#) data leak. Messi, who pleaded ignorance of the alleged scheme, voluntarily paid arrears of €5.1 million in August 2013. On 6 July 2016, Messi and his father were both found guilty of tax fraud and were handed [suspended](#) 21-month prison sentences and respectively ordered to pay €1.7 million and €1.4 million in fines.^[411] Facing the judge, he said, "I just played football. I signed the contracts because I trusted my dad and the lawyers and we had decided that they would take charge of those things."^[412]

Career statistics

Club

As of match played 3 May 2025

Appearances and goals by club, season and competition

Club	Season	League			National cup ^[a]		Continental ^[b]		Other		Total	
		Division	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals
Barcelona C	2003–04 ^[413]	Tercera División	10	5	—		—		—		10	5
Barcelona B	2003–04 ^[414]	Segunda División B	5	0	—		—		—		5	0
	2004–05 ^[415]	Segunda División B	17	6	—		—		—		17	6
	Total		22	6	—		—		—		22	6
Barcelona	2004–05 ^[415]	La Liga	7	1	1	0	1	0	—		9	1
	2005–06 ^[416]	La Liga	17	6	2	1	6	1	0	0	25	8
	2006–07 ^[417]	La Liga	26	14	2	2	5	1	3 ^[c]	0	36	17
	2007–08 ^[418]	La Liga	28	10	3	0	9	6	—		40	16
	2008–09 ^[419]	La Liga	31	23	8	6	12	9	—		51	38
	2009–10 ^[420]	La Liga	35	34	3	1	11	8	4 ^[d]	4	53	47
	2010–11 ^[421]	La Liga	33	31	7	7	13	12	2 ^[e]	3	55	53
	2011–12 ^[422]	La Liga	37	50	7	3	11	14	5 ^[f]	6	60	73
	2012–13 ^[423]	La Liga	32	46	5	4	11	8	2 ^[e]	2	50	60

	2013–14 ^[424]	La Liga	31	28	6	5	7	8	2 ^[e]	0	46	41
	2014–15 ^[425]	La Liga	38	43	6	5	13	10	—		57	58
	2015–16 ^[426]	La Liga	33	26	5	5	7	6	4 ^[g]	4	49	41
	2016–17 ^[427]	La Liga	34	37	7	5	9	11	2 ^[e]	1	52	54
	2017–18 ^[428]	La Liga	36	34	6	4	10	6	2 ^[e]	1	54	45
	2018–19 ^[429]	La Liga	34	36	5	3	10	12	1 ^[e]	0	50	51
	2019–20 ^[430]	La Liga	33	25	2	2	8	3	1 ^[e]	1	44	31
	2020–21 ^[431]	La Liga	35	30	5	3	6	5	1 ^[e]	0	47	38
	Total		520	474	80	56	149	120	29	22	778	672
Paris Saint-Germain	2021–22 ^[432]	Ligue 1	26	6	1	0	7	5	—		34	11
	2022–23 ^[433]	Ligue 1	32	16	1	0	7	4	1 ^[h]	1	41	21
	Total		58	22	2	0	14	9	1	1	75	32
Inter Miami	2023	MLS	6	1	1	0	—		7 ^[i]	10	14	11
	2024	MLS	19	20	—		3 ^[j]	2	3 ^[k]	1	25	23
	2025	MLS	7	4	—		7 ^[j]	5	0	0	14	9
	Total		32	25	1	0	10	7	10	11	53	43
Career total			642	532	83	56	173	136	40	34	938	758

- a. [^] Includes [Copa del Rey](#), [Coupe de France](#), [U.S. Open Cup](#)
- b. [^] All appearances in [UEFA Champions League](#), unless otherwise noted
- c. [^] One appearance in [UEFA Super Cup](#), two appearances in [Supercopa de España](#)
- d. [^] One appearance in UEFA Super Cup, one appearance and two goals in Supercopa de España, two appearances and two goals in [FIFA Club World Cup](#)
- e. [^] ^a ^b ^c ^d ^e ^f ^g ^h Appearance(s) in Supercopa de España
- f. [^] One appearance and one goal in UEFA Super Cup, two appearances and three goals in Supercopa de España, two appearances and two goals in FIFA Club World Cup
- g. [^] One appearance and two goals in UEFA Super Cup, two appearances and one goal in Supercopa de España, one appearance and one goal in FIFA Club World Cup
- h. [^] Appearance in [Trophée des Champions](#)
- i. [^] Appearances in [Leagues Cup](#)
- j. [^] ^a ^b Appearances in [CONCACAF Champions Cup](#)
- k. [^] Appearances in [MLS Cup playoffs](#)

International

See also: *[List of international goals scored by Lionel Messi](#)*

As of match played 19 November 2024

Appearances and goals by national team, year and competition

Team	Year	Competitive	Friendly	Total
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		Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals
Argentina U20 ^{[192][434]}	2004	—		2	3	2	3
	2005	16 ^[a]	11	—		16	11
	Total	16	11	2	3	18	14
Argentina U23 ^{[435][436]}	2008	5 ^[b]	2	—		5 ^[a]	2
	Total	5	2	0	0	5	2
Argentina ^{[440][441]}	2005	3 ^[c]	0	2	0	5	0
	2006	3 ^[d]	1	4	1	7	2
	2007	10 ^[e]	4	4	2	14	6
	2008	6 ^[f]	1	2	1	8	2
	2009	8 ^[f]	1	2	2	10	3
	2010	5 ^[g]	0	5	2	10	2
	2011	8 ^[h]	2	5	2	13	4
	2012	5 ^[i]	5	4	7	9	12
	2013	5 ^[i]	3	2	3	7	6
	2014	7 ^[j]	4	7	4	14	8
	2015	6 ^[k]	1	2	3	8	4
	2016	10 ^[l]	8	1	0	11	8
	2017	5 ^[m]	4	2	0	7	4
	2018	4 ^[n]	1	1	3	5	4
	2019	6 ^[o]	1	4	4	10	5
	2020	4 ^[p]	1	—		4	1
	2021	16 ^[q]	9	—		16	9
	2022	10 ^[r]	8	4	10	14	18
	2023	5 ^[s]	3	3	5	8	8
	2024	9 ^[t]	4	2	2	11	6
	Total	135	61	56	51	191	112
Career total		156	74	58	54	213	128

- a. [^] Nine appearances and five goals in the [2005 South American U-20 Championship](#), seven appearances and six goals in the [2005 FIFA World Youth Championship](#).
- b. [^] Appearances in the [2008 Summer Olympics](#).
- c. [^] Appearances in [2006 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).
- d. [^] Appearances in [2006 FIFA World Cup](#).
- e. [^] Six appearances and two goals in [2007 Copa América](#), four appearances and two goals in [2010 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).

- f. [^] ^{*a*} ^{*b*} Appearances in [2010 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).
- g. [^] Appearances in [2010 FIFA World Cup](#).
- h. [^] Four appearances in [2011 Copa América](#), four appearances and two goals in [2014 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).
- i. [^] ^{*a*} ^{*b*} Appearances in [2014 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).
- j. [^] Appearances in [2014 FIFA World Cup](#).
- k. [^] Appearances in [2015 Copa América](#).
- l. [^] Five appearances and three goals in [2018 FIFA World Cup qualification](#), five appearances and five goals in [Copa América Centenario](#).
- m. [^] Appearances in [2018 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).
- n. [^] Appearances in [2018 FIFA World Cup](#).
- o. [^] Appearances in [2019 Copa América](#).
- p. [^] Appearances in [2022 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).
- q. [^] Nine appearances and five goals in [2022 FIFA World Cup qualification](#), seven appearances and four goals in [2021 Copa América](#).
- r. [^] Two appearances and one goal in [2022 FIFA World Cup qualification](#), one appearance in [2022 Finalissima](#), seven appearances and seven goals in [2022 FIFA World Cup](#).
- s. [^] Appearances in [2026 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).
- t. [^] Five appearances and one goal in [2024 Copa América](#), four appearances and three goals in [2026 FIFA World Cup qualification](#).

Honours

For a comprehensive listing of Messi's achievements, see [List of career achievements by Lionel Messi](#).

Barcelona^{[11][12][20]}

- [La Liga](#): [2004–05](#), [2005–06](#), [2008–09](#), [2009–10](#), [2010–11](#), [2012–13](#), [2014–15](#), [2015–16](#), [2017–18](#), [2018–19](#)
- [Copa del Rey](#): [2008–09](#), [2011–12](#), [2014–15](#), [2015–16](#), [2016–17](#), [2017–18](#), [2020–21](#)
- [Supercopa de España](#):^[note 3] [2006](#), [2009](#), [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#), [2018](#)
- [UEFA Champions League](#): [2005–06](#), [2008–09](#), [2010–11](#), [2014–15](#)
- [UEFA Super Cup](#): [2009](#), [2011](#), [2015](#)
- [FIFA Club World Cup](#): [2009](#), [2011](#), [2015](#)

Paris Saint-Germain^{[12][20]}

- [Ligue 1](#): [2021–22](#), [2022–23](#)
- [Trophée des Champions](#): [2022](#)

Inter Miami^{[12][13][20]}

- [Supporters' Shield](#): [2024](#)
- [Leagues Cup](#): [2023](#)

Argentina U20^{[12][20]}

- [FIFA World Youth Championship](#): [2005](#)

Argentina U23^{[12][20]}



Messi ([Golden Ball winner](#)) pictured with future teammate [Neymar](#) ([Bronze Ball winner](#)) at the conclusion of the [2011 FIFA Club World Cup final](#).

- [Olympic Games: 2008](#)

Argentina^{[12][20]}

- [FIFA World Cup: 2022](#)
- [Copa América: 2021, 2024](#)
- [Finalissima: 2022](#)

Individual

- [Ballon d'Or: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2021, 2023^{\[note 2\]}](#)
- [FIFA World Player of the Year/FIFA Ballon d'Or/The Best FIFA Men's Player: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2022, 2023^{\[note 2\]}](#)
- [European Golden Shoe: 2009–10, 2011–12, 2012–13, 2016–17, 2017–18, 2018–19^{\[143\]\[442\]}](#)
- [FIFA World Cup Golden Ball: 2014, 2022^{\[12\]\[443\]}](#)
- [FIFA World Cup Silver Boot: 2022](#)
- [FIFA Club World Cup Golden Ball: 2009, 2011^{\[12\]}](#)
- [FIFA U-20 World Cup Golden Ball: 2005^{\[12\]}](#)
- [FIFA U-20 World Cup Golden Boot: 2005^{\[12\]}](#)
- [UEFA Club Footballer of the Year: 2008–09](#)
- [UEFA Men's Player of the Year Award: 2010–11, 2014–15](#)
- [UEFA Champions League top scorer: 2008–09, 2009–10, 2010–11, 2011–12, 2014–15, 2018–19](#)
- [Copa América Golden Ball: 2015, 2021](#)
- [Copa América Golden Boot: 2021](#)
- [La Liga Best Player: 2008–09, 2009–10, 2010–11, 2011–12, 2012–13, 2014–15,^{\[444\]\[445\]\[446\]} 2016–17,^{\[447\]} 2017–18,^{\[448\]} 2018–19^{\[449\]\[450\]}](#)
- [MLS Most Valuable Player: 2024^{\[189\]}](#)
- [Pichichi Trophy: 2009–10, 2011–12, 2012–13, 2016–17, 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, 2020–21](#)
- [Laureus World Sportsman of the Year: 2020,^{\[443\]} 2023^{\[451\]}](#)
- [Ballon d'Or Dream Team: 2020^{\[452\]}](#)
- [FIFPRO World 11: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023^{\[453\]\[454\]}](#)
- [Argentine Sportsperson of the Year: 2011, 2021, 2022, 2023^{\[455\]}](#)
- [Argentine Footballer of the Year: 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023^{\[444\]\[443\]\[456\]}](#)

Orders

- [Creu de Sant Jordi, Catalonia \(30 April 2019\)^{\[457\]}](#)
- [Presidential Medal of Freedom, United States \(4 January 2025\)^{\[384\]\[458\]}](#)

See also

- [European Cup and UEFA Champions League records and statistics](#)
- [La Liga records and statistics](#)
- [List of Argentina international footballers](#)



portal portal



Association football portal

- [List of association football rivalries](#)
- [List of FC Barcelona players](#)
- [List of FC Barcelona records and statistics](#)
- [List of Paris Saint-Germain FC players](#)
- [List of Inter Miami CF players](#)
- [List of FIFA World Cup winning players](#)
- [List of largest sports contracts](#)
- [List of men's footballers with 50 or more international goals](#)
- [List of men's footballers with 100 or more international caps](#)
- [List of men's footballers with 500 or more goals](#)
- [List of men's footballers with the most official appearances](#)
- [List of most-followed Instagram accounts](#)
- [List of most-liked Instagram posts](#)
- [List of players who have appeared in the most FIFA World Cups](#)
- [List of top international men's football goalscorers by country](#)

Notes

- [^] According to FCBarcelona.com, and his authorised biography, *Messi* by [Guillem Balagué](#), his surname is the single "Messi", in accordance with Argentine customs.^{[2][3]} Other sources, including a 2014 document by [FIFA](#), give his surname as the double "Messi Cuccittini".^[4] After winning a libel case in 2017, Messi's own management company stated: "The football player **Lionel Andres Messi Cuccittini** has donated a total of €72,783.20 to the organisation [Doctors Without Borders](#)."^[5]
- [^] ^{*a*} ^{*b*} ^{*c*} Messi received *France Football*'s [2009 Ballon d'Or](#) and [FIFA's 2009 FIFA World Player of the Year](#) award, prior to their [six-year merger](#); he proceeded to win the newly formed award, the [FIFA Ballon d'Or](#), four times: [2010](#), [2011](#), [2012](#), [2015](#). Both organisations credited him with five (FIFA) Ballon d'Or awards.^{[6][7][8]} He then went on to win the Ballon d'Or three more times – [2019](#), [2021](#), [2023](#) – again solely assigned by *France Football*, and won the newly established [The Best FIFA Men's Player](#) three times as well – [2019](#), [2022](#), [2023](#). *France Football* recognizes him as a record eight-time Ballon d'Or winner and FIFA recognizes him as a record eight-time world's best player.^{[9][10]}
- [^] ^{*a*} ^{*b*} According to [FC Barcelona](#),^[11] [FIFA](#),^[12] [Major League Soccer](#),^[13] the [Royal Spanish Football Federation](#),^[14] and multiple media outlets,^{[15][16][17]} Messi also won the [2005 Supercopa de España](#), bringing his Barcelona trophy total to 35 and his career total to 46.^[18] However, this particular trophy is not credited here since Messi was out of the squad and did not feature in any of the two games against [Real Betis](#).^{[19][20]}
- ^α ^{*a*} ^{*b*} Does not include an [unofficial friendly match](#) played on 24 May 2008 in Barcelona between Argentina U23 and the [Catalonia national football team](#),^{[437][438]} as Catalonia is not affiliated with either [FIFA](#) or [UEFA](#) as a [national member association](#) and is therefore not allowed to participate in official competitions.^[439]

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<div><div> Preceded by</div><div>Andrés Iniesta</div></div>	<div><div> </div><div>FC Barcelona captain</div><div> 2018–2021</div></div>	<div><div> Succeeded by</div><div>Sergio Busquets</div></div>

V T E	Inter Miami CF – current squad	[hide]
1 Callender · 2 Luján · 5 Busquets · 6 Avilés · 7 Picault · 8 Segovia · 9 Suárez · 10 Messi (c) · 11 Rodríguez · 14 Martínez · 15 Sailor · 17 Fray · 18 Alba · 19 Ustari · 21 Allende · 22 Afonso · 26 Hall · 29 Obando · 30 Cremaschi · 32 Allen · 34 Ríos Novo · 37 Falcón · 41 Ruiz · 42 Bright · 55 Redondo · 57 Weigandt · 62 Boatwright · 81 S. Morales <div>Head coach: Mascherano · Assistant coach: J. Morales · Assistant coach: Rodríguez Pagano · Assistant coach: Stillitano · Goalkeeping coach: Dobler</div>		
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