



SOCCER

Ronaldo's status unknown for 'El Clasico' as Barcelona and Real Madrid are set to arrive in Miami

BY MICHELLE KAUFMAN
 mkaufman@miamiherald.com

JULY 26, 2017 9:48 PM

The Spanish soccer royalty — Real Madrid and FC Barcelona — arrive in Miami on Thursday and begin preparations for Saturday's El Clasico match at Hard Rock Stadium. Both teams played International Champions Cup matches Wednesday night, Real Madrid losing 4-1 to Manchester City in Los Angeles and Barcelona beating Manchester United 1-0 in Landover, Md.

Barcelona players, coaches and officials are scheduled to arrive in Miami around 2 p.m. and check into the East Hotel at Brickell City Centre. Real Madrid is due to check into the Mandarin Oriental Hotel downtown late Thursday night. Security will be tight around both hotels.

The status of Real Madrid star **Cristiano Ronaldo** for Saturday's game remains unknown. He is on extended vacation, fulfilling commercial obligations and did not travel with the team for their first two ICC matches. El Clasico Miami organizers remained hopeful on Wednesday that Ronaldo would make it to Miami by Saturday.

At noon Friday, the entire FC Barcelona team is scheduled to appear at the Casa Clasico fanfest at Bayfront Park. Admission is free.

Breaking News

Be the first to know when big news breaks

Enter Email Address

SIGN UP



Barcelona's Neymar, right, scores a goal in front of teammate Lionel Messi, center, Manchester United's Michael Carrick, left, and Victor Lindelof during the first half of an International Champions Cup soccer match, Wed., July 26, 2017, in Landover, Md.

Patrick Semansky - AP

Both teams will hold ticketed training sessions at Hard Rock Stadium on Friday night — Barcelona from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Real Madrid from 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Tickets range from \$20 to \$30 and are available at www.ElClasicoMiami.com

Also on Friday, fans of Spain's La Liga can watch a collection of league legends in a 3 p.m. exhibition match at Bayfront Park. The event is part of Casa Clasico.

Among the players scheduled to participate: **Carles Puyol** (FC Barcelona); **Koke Contreras** (Real Madrid CF); **Cesar Sanchez** (Real Madrid CF); **Fernando Sanz** (Real Madrid CF); **Christian Karembeu** (Real Madrid CF); **Patrick Kluivert** (FC Barcelona); **Fernando Hierro** (Real Madrid CF); **Gaizka Mendieta** (FC Barcelona); **Marcos Senna** (Villarreal CF); **Ludovic Giuly** (FC Barcelona); **Fernando Morientes** (Real Madrid CF); and **Julio Baptista** (Real Madrid CF).



Pregame sights and sounds before PSG-Juventus clash in Miami

Six-time defending Italian champion Juventus took on French favorite Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday night at Hard Rock Stadium in the week's lesser-hyped International Champions Cup soccer match.

David Santiago - el Nuevo Herald

MALDINI ON JUVE AND MIAMI FC

Speaking of legends, Italian great **Paolo Maldini**, a part-time Miami resident and investor in Miami FC, was at Hard Rock Stadium on Wednesday for the game between Juventus and Paris Saint-Germain. He is an official ambassador of the ICC.

Miami FC coach **Alessandro Nesta**, the former Italian national team star who was Maldini's teammate at Milan, was also planning to attend. Another former Milan player, **Andriy Shevchenko**, also requested a ticket.

"It's still preseason, and the teams are not in the best shape yet, but there is no friendly, they say, when you have 50,000 people," Maldini said before the game. "I am very close to Serie A, follow it very closely. Juventus lost last four finals, it's very hard. Every time they get there, they have a mental problem. But to be there, twice in four years, they're very good and favorite again in Italian league and a favorite to make a run in Champions League."





Juventus and PSG kick off El Clasico week in Miami

Juventus defeated PSG 3-2 on Wednesday night at Hard Rock Stadium in the warm up to Saturday's showdown between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona.

Veronika Quispe - vquispe@miamiherald.com

RELATED STORIES FROM MIAMI HERALD



Juventus kicks off El Clasico week with victory over PSG in final minutes



Juventus, PSG deliver entertaining show under specter of Neymar, Ronaldo decisions



Soccer lovers, from near and very far, descend on Miami for El Clasico

Argentinians shine bright in Juventus-PSG friendly in Miami



Neymar would add to PSG's Brazilian contingent

Maldini said he also has been keeping close tabs on Miami FC, which won the NASL Spring Championship and hosts FC Cincinnati Aug. 2 in the U.S. Open Cup quarterfinal. The winner hosts Major League Soccer's New York Red Bulls in the semis Aug. 9.

"They are doing great this season," Maldini said of Miami FC. "The first season, they started from nothing, and we knew it. I told owner **Riccardo Silva** to be patient and calm, with the quality of players and coach, everything will change very soon, and it did. Beating MLS teams means there's not too much difference between the two leagues; but unfortunately, here in America, you don't go into first division by winning second division."

PARTNERSHIP

The FC Barcelona Foundation, the charitable arm of the Spanish soccer club, will sign an agreement Friday with Miami Dade College to launch FutbolNet, an educational program that uses soccer to improve school performance, teach leadership skills, promote self-confidence and provide conflict-resolution techniques. The college will implement FutbolNet at the Kendall and North campuses in 2018.

Never miss a local story.

Sign up today for a free 30 day free trial of unlimited digital access..

SUBSCRIBE NOW

COMMENTS ▼

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Start a Subscription

Customer Service

eEdition