

Sports

'We're pioneers' - Barca's La Masia finally opens its doors to women

Nine female players enroll at Barca's famed football academy

BARCELONA: When Claudia Riumallo Pineda wakes up, it does not take her long to know where she is. From her bedroom window she can see the Johan Cruyff Stadium inside Barcelona's Ciutat Esportiva training ground, where she dreams of one day playing for the women's first team.

She is on the right track. The 18-year-old is one of nine trailblazers who this season became the first female players to enroll at La Masia, Barca's famed football academy and proving ground for the likes of Lionel Messi, Andres Iniesta and Xavi Hernandez. Since its opening in 1979 as an old house next to Camp Nou, La Masia has never had female residents. But the women's team has been knocking on the door for a long time, with Barcelona Femeni winning the Champions League, Liga Femenina and Copa de la Reina last season.

"This year they have given us La Masia, which is a gift," says Claudia, who for years had to travel an hour by car from her town of Girona just to be able to train with girls. After playing for local rivals Espanyol, she now represents Barca B and in the afternoons studies chemistry at university.



SANT JOAN DESPI: In this file photo taken on September 20, 2021 Barcelona's women's B team Spanish goalkeeper Laura Coronado poses in front of the La Masia Residence, Oriol Tort Education Center, in Sant Joan Despi. — AFP

Gavi, the latest gem of the men's team, arrived when he was eleven years old and continues to live there. The 19-year-old Ansu Fati is also a former resident. "The good thing we have at this club is the mirror is very clear," explains Markel Zubizarreta, sporting director of Barcelona Femeni. "We just have to look at the men's side to see what we have to aim for."

From strength to strength

In the corridor heading towards the games room is another reminder: a mural on the wall in tribute to the game between Levante and Barca on November 25, 2012. It was another win that contributed to Barca winning the title that year but also a milestone for La Masia, after Barcelona had 11 homegrown players on the pitch, not to mention the coach, the late Tito Vilanova.

At that time it was difficult to imagine how the female team could find breathing space at a club where the men's team was so dominant — but the women's game continues to go from strength to strength. In 2020, there were 77,400 licensed female players in Spain, 7.2 percent of all the federated footballers, according to statistics from the Ministry of Sports. It is still a small figure, but a clear improvement from 2011,

when there were only 36,200, 4.3 percent of the total.

"There are many things that are still missing, such as professionalization in the League," says Coronado. "We know the salaries are not going to be equal, but we would like to be able to live more comfortably from football, and that's what we're fighting for." Spain's Ministry for Sport approved the professionalization of La Liga Femenina in June but negotiations to see it through are proving complicated.

For all

Like many of her generation, Barca defender Jana Fernandez started out playing with boys. At six years old, she convinced her parents to let her join her local team and, now 19, she has already won the treble. But the road has not been easy.

"I try to remind the girls who are at La Masia now to take advantage as much as possible because I would have loved to be here," explains Fernandez, who combines professional football with a career in advertising. Women's sport has taken a big leap in recent years, but there is still work to do. "We want to fight to get more and more for those playing now," says Fernandez. "And for those that are still to come." — AFP

“ There is still work to do ”

Shaken by financial crisis and the unexpected departure of Messi, most of the good news around the club these days comes from the women's team. As well as last season's treble, Barca's captain Alexia Putellas was chosen as UEFA's best player of the year and is now also nominated, along with four teammates, for the Women's Ballon d'Or.

"It's a huge responsibility because we are the pioneers but it's also nice to know that you are one of the first women to go to La Masia," says Laura Coronado, an 18-year-old goalkeeper. Coronado's photo, like that of the 105 others at La Masia spread across the club's five professional sports, now hangs in the reception of the more modern complex that took over from the original in 2011.

Boswell kicks game-winning field goal as Steelers edge Bears

LOS ANGELES: Chris Boswell booted a 40-yard field goal with 26 seconds left as the Pittsburgh Steelers extended their win streak to four games by coming from behind to squeeze past the Chicago Bears 29-27 on Monday.

Veteran quarterback Ben Roethlisberger combined with receiver Pat Freiermuth for two earlier touchdowns, setting the stage for Boswell's game-winning kick in front of a crowd of 68,400 at Pittsburgh's Heinz Field. "It was a strange game, but it is fun," said Roethlisberger, who completed 21 of 30 passes without an interception. "I wish it wasn't so close. We made it a little stressful but I am proud of the guys."

The mistake-prone Bears seized their only lead of the contest on a 16-yard touchdown pass from rookie quarterback Justin Fields to Darnell Mooney with 1:46 remaining in the fourth quarter. But Roethlisberger and the Steelers weren't willing to quit as they rallied to win and improve to 5-3 on the season.

Pittsburgh prevailed despite being outgained 414 yards to 280 and outscored 21-9 in the fourth quarter. Chicago was penalized a season-high 12 times for 115 yards. The Bears suffered their fourth consecutive loss to drop to 3-6 after a promising start to the season.



PITTSBURGH: Kicker Chris Boswell #9 of the Pittsburgh Steelers kicks the game-winning field goal against the Chicago Bears during the fourth quarter at Heinz Field on Monday in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. — AFP

Fields had the best offensive game of his first NFL season, passing for 291 yards with a touchdown and an interception. This was the second straight week the Steelers have rallied for the win. Last week they came back to beat Cleveland 15-10.

Boswell missed the second half of that game with a concussion and didn't practice much with the team this week. Bears coach Matt Nagy returned to the sidelines Monday following a one-game absence due to the league's COVID-19 health protocols. — AFP

Saudi golf investment not a Norman conquest, says Asian Tour chief

HONG KONG: Greg Norman and his billionaire Saudi backers are not taking over the Asian Tour, insists the circuit's chief, after the Australian great's new company pledged \$200 million to create 10 new tournaments. Nor is the former world number one launching a breakaway "super league" via his plunge into the Asian Tour that shook the golf world, tour commissioner and CEO Cho Minn Thant told AFP.

Norman last month revealed he was the CEO of newly formed LIV Golf Investments, a Saudi sovereign wealth fund-backed company committing \$200 million to 10 new global events on the Asian Tour schedule over the next decade.

Scant on detail, the announcement was interpreted by some as the first move in establishing Norman's oft-touted "super league" that could split men's professional golf and threaten the dominance of the US PGA Tour. Such speculation is wide of the mark, Cho said, while acknowledging that Norman has ambitions to create a superstar golf circuit separate to the main tours. "I think there's been a misconception that LIV Golf has taken over the Asian Tour and we are going to get the 'LIV Golf Tour' or the 'Saudi Tour', which is incorrect," said Cho, speaking by video link from Jupiter, Florida, where two-time major winner Norman is based. "They are a promoter who are adding 10 events to our tournament schedule. Our structure remains the same," assured Cho, who is finalizing details on a 25-event Asian Tour 2022 calendar.

'Most lucrative season'

It will begin with the \$5 million Saudi International on February 3-6. That is not part of the new Norman-funded 10-event series but is expected to attract stars such as Dustin Johnson, who won in 2019 and 2021, when the tournament was sanctioned by the European Tour. The 10 new events, likely to kick off in the Middle East and Europe, will join long-standing Asian tournaments such as the Hong Kong Open and Maybank Championship in Malaysia. To take part, players such as Johnson will need a release from the US PGA Tour, which a year ago formed a "strategic alliance" with the European Tour to counter the threat of any breakaway circuit.

"Obviously, before, they were almost assured of being released," said Cho. "But now I guess it's a little bit harder... just because the PGA and European Tours may feel that we're somewhat more competitive." Cho's focus now is on rekindling the Asian Tour, on hold since March 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic. The interrupted 2020-21 season resumes later this month after a 20-month absence with two \$1 million tournaments in Thailand and will conclude with two more in Singapore in January, ahead of the new season launch in February.

Cho revealed the new Norman-backed events will be full-field with "70 to 80 Asian Tour members" with slots available to the top 200 in the world, plus others including elite amateurs. "To have 10 tournaments with prize money above \$1 million each has basically never before been seen on the Asian Tour," said Cho. "It's very likely to be the Asian Tour's most lucrative season." The majority shareholder in LIV Golf Investments is the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF), one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds and behind the takeover of Premier League football club Newcastle United. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

| | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------------|----------|
| Sabah Hospital | 24812000 | Kaifan | 24849807 |
| Amiri Hospital | 22450005 | Shamiya | 24848913 |
| Maternity Hospital | 24843100 | Shuwaikh | 24814507 |
| Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital | 25312700 | Abdullah Salem | 22549134 |
| Chest Hospital | 24849400 | Nuzha | 22526804 |
| Farwaniya Hospital | 24892010 | Industrial Shuwaikh | 24814764 |
| Adan Hospital | 23940620 | Qadsiya | 22515088 |
| Ibn Sina Hospital | 24840300 | | Dasmah |
| Al-Razi Hospital | 24846000 | 22532265 | |
| Physiotherapy Hospital | 24874330/9 | Bneid Al-Gar | 22531908 |
| | | Shaab | 22518752 |
| | | Qibla | 22459381 |
| | | Ayoun Al-Qibla | 22451082 |
| | | Mirqab | 22456536 |
| | | Sharq | 22465401 |
| | | Salmiya | 25746401 |

Clinics

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Kaizen center | 25716707 |
| Rawda | 22517733 |
| Adaliya | 22517144 |
| Khalidiya | 24848075 |

Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**

Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**

Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616 / 7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621
E: info@kuwaittimes.net

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NOORUL AMEEN S/o MOHAMED MOOSA, Passport No. K7915173, D/O/B-19.04.1975, I have changed my name to MOHAMED NOORUL AMEEN. (C 0969) 10-11-2021

Old name: Chennareddy Subbareddy S/o Chennareddy Narayana Reddy Passport no. K4765901. Address 5, Dirasavantha Brahmamgarimattam, yrs. Kadapa District Pin 516502, Andhra Pradesh India New Name Katterapalle Subbareddy S/o Katterapalle Narayana Reddy (a.d no=930829459042). New Address: Door No 8-3-106 Koti Reddy Nagar Gopavaram (mandal) Badvel Municipality yrs Kadapa District, A.P India Pin Code 516227. I have change name & address. (C 0968) 8-11-2021

EMERGENCY
112