

# Messi unveiled in Miami amid thunderstorm

● **Lionel Messi hailed as 'America's number 10' as he greets rapturous Miami fans**

TAFP | Miami

It rained on his parade, but Lionel Messi greeted his new Inter Miami fans and was hailed by the club's owner as "America's number 10" at a damp but celebratory unveiling event on Sunday.

Miami's 20,000 capacity stadium was close to full despite a huge thunderstorm just before the event to celebrate the arrival of the Argentine World Cup winner was due to begin.

A massive tropical downpour forced organizers to delay the start of "The Unveil" as fans took cover or waited out the rain in their cars.

The event started around two hours later than originally scheduled with wet but delighted fans chanting Messi's name as the lights dimmed on the venue.

The club's co-owner David Beckham opened the ceremony saying Messi's arrival was a "dream come true".



Argentine soccer star Lionel Messi (2nd L) is presented by (from R) owners of Inter Miami CF David Beckham, Jose R. Mas and Jorge Mas

"Leo, we are so proud that you have chosen our club for the next stage in your career," said the former Manchester United player whose move to MLS's Los Angeles Galaxy in 2007 was the league's previous biggest arrival. "Welcome to our family Leo," Beckham added in Spanish, to roars from the crowd.

Miami's majority owner Jorge Mas then whipped the crowd up with his own bilingual speech.

"Tonight is a gift and celebration to the city that opened

its arms to my family," said the Cuban-American businessman. "Tonight we are doing this in the rain. 'This is holy water!'" he added.

"This is our moment! Our moment to change the football landscape in this country," he added, before introducing Messi as "Your new number 10, America's number 10".

Messi, who arrived in Miami on Tuesday with his family and caused a viral sensation after being photographed shopping with

"I am very happy to have chosen to come to play in this city with my family, to choose this project and I have no doubt that we are going to enjoy it a lot, we are going to have a good time and very good things are going to happen

LIONEL MESSI

them in a local supermarket, thanked the supporters.

"Thank you very much to all the people for supporting me and giving me this love. I am very happy to be here in Miami," he said.

"I really want to start training, to compete, I have the same desire that I always had to compete, to want to win, to help the club continue to grow.

"I am very happy to have chosen to come to play in this city with my family, to choose this project and I have no doubt that we are going to enjoy it a lot, we are going to have a good time and very good things are going to happen," he said.

Inter Miami, the bottom club in Major League Soccer, confirmed on Saturday that the seven-times Ballon d'Or winner had signed a deal that will keep him with the club until 2025.

The former Barcelona great opted to join Miami after his contract with French club Paris Saint-Germain expired last month.

His former Barcelona teammate, Spanish midfielder Sergio Busquets, was also presented to the crowd after completing his move.

Major League Soccer commissioner Don Garber praised Mas for his determined pursuit of Messi for the club which is in only its fourth season.

**Greatest of all time**

"Lionel Messi was on his radar from the very beginning. I have to say, when he would say that many years ago, I didn't think that he would be able to deliver it," Garber told reporters.

"But here we are today with a player that I think, without doubt, is not only a generational player, but in my opinion, the greatest of all time."

He was scheduled to hold a press conference yesterday but the club said Sunday that had

been postponed. No explanation for the decision was given.

Messi could make his debut for the club on Friday against Mexico team Cruz Azul in the new Leagues Cup, which features teams from both MLS and Mexico's Liga MX.

However on Saturday, the team's new Argentine coach Gerardo Martino urged "patience" after watching his side's winless streak extend to 11 games.

"We look to the future with hope (given) that the best player in the world will play for our team, but also with the patience that we have to have so that he can get in good physical shape and can play at the right moment," he said.

Latin music stars Camilo and Ozuna were set to entertain the crowd at the DRV PNK Stadium, about an hour's drive north of downtown Miami.

The stadium, Inter Miami's temporary home on the site of the old home of the now defunct Fort Lauderdale Strikers, was not completely full as the event got under way with fireworks.

Inter are planning their own purpose-built stadium, Freedom Park, in Miami but it is not expected to open until 2025.

## Kane 'totally committed' to Tottenham, Postecoglou says

AFP | Perth

New Tottenham coach Ange Postecoglou said yesterday Harry Kane was "totally committed" to his vision for the north London club as speculation mounts over the England captain's future.

Kane has entered the final 12 months of his six-year Spurs contract and has been courted aggressively by Bayern Munich.

Unfazed by the uncertainty ahead of next month's start of the English Premier League season, Postecoglou said his initial discussions with Kane had been instructive.

"I had a good chat with Harry... nothing earth-shattering or defining," he said before Tottenham's pre-season friendly against West Ham in Perth on Tuesday.

"Me and Harry were perfectly aligned in... we want to see a successful team this year.

"He's here and while he's here, he's totally committed to what we're doing."

Bayern Munich honorary president Uli Hoeness added to the tug-of-war for the 29-year-old's services by telling journal-



Ange Postecoglou

ists on Saturday Kane's "mind is made up" to switch to the Bundesliga champions.

"No one has spoken to me from Munich," Postecoglou said. "If other clubs want to talk about our contracted players, that's more of an issue for them than us.

"There are a lot of people that know Harry better than me but he's not going to get fazed by anything."

Kane headlines Tottenham's 31-man squad for their pre-season tour to Perth, Bangkok and Singapore.

But captain Hugo Lloris is a notable absentee, with the goalkeeper granted permission to

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ANGE POSTECOGLOU

skip the trip as he seeks opportunities elsewhere.

"I had a good chat with him and left it up to him whether he wanted to come along," Postecoglou said.

"I think he deserves that respect to garner the direction of his own future... because of his standing."

The no-nonsense Postecoglou's first game in charge of Tottenham will be in Australia, to where his family emigrated from Greece when he was five.

"Could have gone anywhere in the world and ended up... back in Australia, which is great," he said of the game against West

Ham, which is set to attract a crowd of more than 50,000 at Perth's Optus Stadium.

"Chuffed to bits that this is going to be our first official game."

Having unleashed a swash-buckling style in his previous roles in Australia, Greece, Japan and, most recently, Scottish club Celtic, Postecoglou promised a similar attacking approach in his most high-profile job to date.

"Nothing has really changed in the way I do things," he said.

"What I do try and envisage is the team playing a certain way. That's what drives me.

"I want the team to play football that is exciting for the fans and ultimately brings success."



Harry Kane

## Anderson recalled by England for fourth Ashes Test

AFP | London

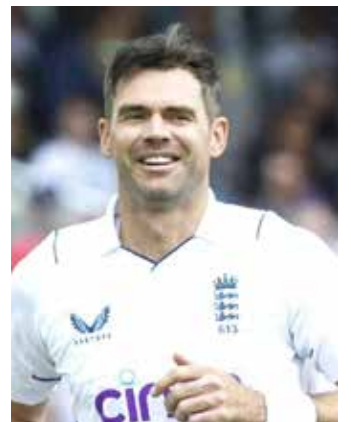
England have recalled 40-year-old James Anderson for the fourth Ashes Test against Australia, which begins at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

Ollie Robinson makes way in the only change from the side that won the third Test to reduce Australia's series lead to 2-1 with two to play.

Moeen Ali will bat at number three, as he did in the second innings at Headingley, allowing Harry Brook to remain at number five.

Anderson, who has the third highest number of Test wickets of all-time, was dropped for the third Test after taking just three wickets for 226 runs in the first two matches of the series.

England need to win both remaining Tests to win the Ashes for the first time since 2015.



James Anderson

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One more win for Australia will see the visitors win the series in England for the first time since 2001.

## China wins more diving gold at world championships

AFP | Fukuoka

Chinese divers continued their dominance at the world championships in Japan yesterday, winning another two gold medals to make it seven out of seven so far.

Chang Yani and Chen Yiwen won the women's 3m synchronised springboard before compatriots Lian Junjie and Yang Hao took gold in the men's 10m synchronised event.

China won every diving gold at last year's world championships in Budapest and have so far maintained a perfect record



China's Chang Yani and China's Chen Yiwen compete in the preliminary of the women's 3m synchronised diving event

in the southern Japanese city of Fukuoka.

Chen, who picked up a fourth world championships gold med-

al, said she preferred diving in pairs events because it gave her "a sense of security".

"The Chinese team is strong because we get a lot of support from our coaches," the 24-year-old said.

"They have encouraged us for many years."

Chang and Chen scored 341.94 to finish ahead of Britain's Scarlett Mew Jensen and Yasmin Harper on 296.58 and Italy's Chiara Pellacani and Elena Bertocchi on 285.99.

In the men's 10m synchronised, Lian and Yang finished first with a score of 477.75.

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