

# Messi's new Barcelona Contract; What is really going on?

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According to very well-informed sources, Leonel Messi is preparing to sign a new contract for five seasons with Barcelona and it is very likely that he will only play for two years and after that he will have a role in the structure of the club.

**The situation was bizarre:** Messi, Copa América 2021 champion, top favorite to win the next Ballon d'Or, willing to cut his salary in half, and be a free player without a valid contract. What a strange situation.

The most informed newspapers from Barcelona, AS and L'ESPRESSO, mention that the net annual salary in the first two years of the new contract will be 20 million euros, about half of what was earned in the previous contract.

Barcelona were slow to offer the Argentine a formal contract. The first idea was a one-year contract with an option to renew for another season.

Afterwards, the two-season option was introduced. Now finally there is talk of a five-year contract, two as a player and another three with the Argentine in the role of ambassador or technical secretary of the club.

The delay in proposing the new contract and the proposed salary intrigue me. Since taking office as new president (17-03-2021), Joan Laporta has promised that he would do everything for Leonel Messi to stay at the club. In the inauguration speech and in the presence of Messi, he said just that.

Did it take four months to find a solution? In Spain it is already known that clubs, due to financial rules, do not register who they want, reaching the point of having let Messi's previous contract expire and he found himself in a position never seen of being a free player.

Laporta getting Messi to sign the new contract under the known terms, nevertheless makes a master move: Not only does he get Leonel Messi to stay connected to Barcelona for another five years for half the amount, it also revives the interest of the main sponsors (many sponsors only accept sponsorship if Leonel Messi is in the club ) and still finds an excellent argument for many other players in the squad like Pique, Busquets, Jordi Alba and Sergi Roberto, among some of the most prominent, to also end up accepting a reduction of 50 percent on their wages since the captain did too. Well done for Joan Laporta.

The other situation that also intrigues me is why Leonel Messi did not have other proposals from other European clubs' sharks? None of the big European clubs made a move to sign the Argentine after more than three weeks without a contract. The best player in the world, or second best for those who consider CR7 the best, free of contract is a must-see candy on the market for clubs that have more financial resources. But that did not happen. So, what happened that they did not show interest this year?



Paris Saint Germain prioritizes a renewal with Kylian Mbappe giving him the same salary as Neymar (36 million euros net) and does not advance to Messi? A club that is obsessed with winning the Champions League and has his friend Neymar in the team, does not make any offer?

Manchester United has just signed Jadon Sancho for 80 million euros and a salary of 15 million plus 5 in targets, that have David De Gea earning 22 million euros net per year, is not available for Leonel Messi?

The other club that could have entered the race for Messi is Manchester City, who are looking for a striker after Kun Agüero's departure and have prepared more than €100m for the current transfer window. But Manchester City did not bid for Messi either. City focused more on Harry Kane and Lewandowski than Messi. Pep Guardiola declares himself an admirer of the Argentine, but also does nothing to bring him to his team, which would have taken Man City to a footballing and commercial level they had never seen before.

It is difficult to understand that Messi stays at Barcelona to earn much less money when, in addition, one of his arguments for choosing a team was to be sure of a good sports project. In 2019-20 Barcelona's salary limit was €671m. Last season, it was €347m. Next season's figure has not been revealed yet, but is expected to be around €200m. Less than three times less than two seasons ago.

Will it be, with all the Barcelona constraints in the coming seasons, a good sporting project for Leonel Messi? One day we will know what really happened to Lionel Messi's strange new contract.

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