



Xavi must remember that being a Barcelona icon is no guarantee for success as coach

► Catalan club has a history of bringing former players into management but many have failed to deliver



Xavi Hernandez, right, and Barcelona president Joan Laporta during Xavi's presentation ceremony to become Barcelona manager at Camp Nou on November 8, 2021. AFP

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Xavi Hernandez is back where it all started, returning to Barcelona as manager hoping to get the club back on track.

[During his unveiling](#), Xavi spoke of the man he says he wants to follow - Pep Guardiola. He would do well to follow in Pep's footsteps. In fact, there are quite a few similarities between the two.

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Dani Alves returning to Barcelona to team up with Xavi

Guardiola went from Miniestadi (now called the Johan Cruyff stadium) to Camp Nou to triumph as a Barca midfielder. Xavi too.

Guardiola played two Champions League finals as a starter, Xavi too. Guardiola played in Qatar, and so did Xavi. Guardiola took charge of a high-profile team without much experience as a manager, just like Xavi. Guardiola took the opportunity given by Joan Laporta, Xavi did as well.

Guardiola had to coach a team that had his former teammates. So will Xavi.

Xavi, aged 41, is now embarking on a new path that fans hope will be similar to that of Guardiola in a club which has a tradition of giving its former players a chance to take on

the role of managers.

But that path does not always lead to glory. Let's start with the successes.

Cruyff is and will continue to be one of the most important men in Barca's history. His five years as a player and another eight as manager will never be forgotten; especially the latter part. He is, after all, the creator of the current Barca philosophy of football.

Another former player who was successful as a manager is Luis Enrique - the current coach of the Spanish national team.

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in which he won a stunning nine trophies; one of them being the Champions League.

He was aided by the famous 'MSN' trio of Messi, Suarez and Neymar, which landed a treble in Enrique's first season. By all accounts, he is Barcelona's greatest manager in the post-Guardiola era.

Another former player who returned and tasted success is Ernesto Valverde. He was chosen after the departure of Enrique with the aim of staying true to the Barca style. Valverde knew the club well as he spent two seasons there as a player.

As a manager, he won the La Liga two times, plus the Copa del Rey and Spanish Supercup. However, he failed in the Champions League, which was a blot on his record.

As Xavi prepares for possibly his biggest challenge, he would do well to focus on the successes, as well as failures in Barca's management.

Ronald Koeman was idolised by fans for his achievements as a player, [before it all fell apart](#) during his stint as manager.

Another one was Carles Rexach, who also had an excellent reputation among fans. He was at the club between 1964 and 1981. Later on, he became assistant to Cruyff and coached the first team intermittently, but without success. He was the one who discovered Messi and brought him to Barcelona, but finds himself in the list of failed managers.

Xavi is next, and we can only hope he succeeds like Guardiola or Valverde. But he must remember that being a club icon is no guarantee of success.

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