

Inter Miami CF Media Conference

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Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA

David Beckham

Jorge Mas

Sergio Busquets

Lionel Messi

Don Garber

Media Conference



soccer-specific stadiums.

This has to be the moment where you actually look into the mirror and look that camera and say, "I did it."

DAVID BECKHAM: I had that moment in 2007.

You know, you said, you're taking a chance. For me it wasn't taking a chance. I know America. I know this sport. I know that this was going to be a challenge, me moving to America to a different league, playing for the L.A. Galaxy. I was excited about the challenge. It was a chance to actually raise the profile of this game. The biggest game in the world, raise the profile of it, in America, and my commitment was always to the League, to my team at the time, to my teammates. But I sit here now.

THE MODERATOR: None of us were there for your unveiling with the L.A. Galaxy. Has this brought back any memories, any nightmares? Is there any reminiscing today?

DAVID BECKHAM: There was no nightmares. It was all great. Actually it was sunny, a hot day.

But tonight is the typical Miami welcome for one of the greatest players to ever have played the game, and the fact that we have our fans in here celebrating this moment, you know, my commitment in 2007 was to the sport and to building the sport in this country.

I then needed someone with the same stamina with the same vision as me to bring all of this to life. I needed the right partner. This is a family business, but it's a partnership, and this is what we have created and we're very proud of that.

We are so proud to be joined by the one and only Sergio Busquets.

One of the most completely players of his generation. I am so excited for Sergio and his family to represent our club, and to also reunite in his partnership with Leo. I know that the people of South Florida will take you all into their hearts.

THE MODERATOR: How did you land Lionel Messi?

JORGE MAS: It was the personification of dreams coming true.

When David and I first met and we dreamt of what Inter Miami represents, it started out with the freedom to dream and we dreamed of not only bringing elite players and the best players but the best player to ever Don hoofs, and his name is Lionel Andrés Messi.

And tonight is a celebration for the City of my birth, for Miami but more importantly for fans, Major League Soccer and the football landscape in the United States. There will always be a before and an after Lionel Messi, and tonight that journey begins.

THE MODERATOR: The crowd, the atmosphere created, feel the energy, this is truly special. You're born and raised here, this is your home.

JORGE MAS: Unreal feeling. Contrast that with 2020 and our inauguration with no fans and COVID, and tonight is a spirit and energy that personifies Miami, that personifies the Hispanic roots of the city, and it's an amazing night, an amazing night to celebrate.

THE MODERATOR: The gentleman sitting to my left made a massive decision in 2007 in a time of your life and your career where you said, you know what I'm going to take a chance. You're going to take a chance on a league that I believed in and so many us believed in, but David since you came to the L.A. Galaxy, the expansion went from 20 million to 29 million. There's 29, soon to be 30 teams. You look at what this league has done, 20

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

We are building a special club here at Inter Miami, a club that represents this special place and its people, a club that cares about the community it serves, our fans are what make Inter Miami unique. We are so grateful for your faith, your passion and your energy. Together, we will create unforgettable memories.

Like all of you, I cannot wait to see Leo take the field in our colors.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next chapter of our story starts here, gracias.

SERGIO BUSQUETS: I'm very happy to be here in Miami. For me, it's a blessing to be part of Inter Miami, and I want to thank Jorge, Jose, David, Chris and Charlie for making it possible. So excited to start training and playing with my teammates. See you soon. Thank you so much.

JORGE MAS: Good evening, Miami! Tonight is a gift and a celebration to the city that I was born and opened its arms to my family and so many others seeking freedom. And tonight, we are doing this Miami-style in the rain. This is holy water!

This is a city that's built on dreams, hard work, sacrifice and emblazoned in our jersey is a saying that says, "Freedom to dream." And that will always be this team's mantra.

Today a new journey and a new chapter starts. There will always be a before and after Lionel Messi. We are recipients of a legacy of the greatest player in the world that started at Newell's Old Boys, went to Barcelona ended at PSG, but today, it sits in the hands of Inter Miami and its fans. This is our moment. This is our moment to change the football landscape in this country.

We made a promise and we are going to fulfill this promise. We promised the city that we would dream; that we would sign the best players in the world, and the best player in the world. And tonight, that dream comes true.

But without anything further, I would like to introduce to you your No. 10, Inter Miami No. 10, America's No. 10, the best No. 10 in the world, Lionel Andrés Messi.

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to Miami.

LIONEL MESSI: Thank you very much. I'm very moved to be here in Miami, to be with you. I want to thank all of you on behalf of my family for the kindness that you have given me, and this has happened so fast. I know that for us it was spectacular, and I'm anxious to start to train and to

compete, and I've always had the belief that I want to win and I want to be a champion.

Our objective is to be here and have victories. I also want to thank you for the kindness that you have given towards me and I'm very happy to come here and with my family, also, your welcome to them.

JORGE MAS: To the family, I want to present to the Messi family, the Beckham family that are here with us to give a real welcome from Miami.

THE MODERATOR: Don, you have forever changed and what people look and what people make of Major League Soccer, but Lionel Messi, did you ever think that this was truly possible?

COMMISSIONER DON GARBER: We dreamed that MLS would be one of the great soccer leagues in the world and be part of a growing soccer nation, and there have been so many things that have gotten us to this point.

This is just really taking it to an entirely new level, in my opinion, the best player in the world making MLS a league of choice, giving us the momentum we are going to need to take the road to the World Cup in 2026.

THE MODERATOR: This is the wettest you've ever been in any interview with me. Going back to 2007, David Beckham made a decision that you were at the helm of, but you said it, David said it, and now it's come to fruition: This league was way more about thriving and surviving, and that league changed when we made the decision -- and I find it ironic, that he's taking it to a whole other level.

COMMISSIONER DON GARBER: The league has gone from strength-to-strength over so many years, really over two and a half decades.

David was the first one that actually said, "I believe in what soccer in America can be," and now the U.S. and Canada. He said in 2014 at a press conference we had here at Miami, that "I believe we'll be able to bring some of the great players in the world to this city," and look what they have done.

This is pretty spectacular. Rain aside -- it's actually not raining too hard right now. Felt bad for you guys earlier though.

THE MODERATOR: When you talk about it and write your book when it's all said and done, what's the chapter you want everyone to read?

COMMISSIONER DON GARBER: It's not a single-chapter



book. It's really a series of so many different chapters. Jorge Mas has said there's MLS before Messi and MLS after. I actually don't know that I agree with that. It's just a series of great decisions from owners, people that believe in Major League Soccer; our great partnership with Apple that is broadcasting this event around the world and giving you all a platform to take every game to take your show to the far corners of this earth.

This year alone, a new team in St. Louis is setting records; announcing our 30th team in San Diego; 82,000 in a rescheduled game with LAFC versus the Galaxy. Just one more step as this sport and this league continues.

THE MODERATOR: 15 years ago, 2007, David Beckham, so we are in the aftermath of that. What's the narrative, 20 to 30 years from now, when we look back and say, look at the Messi tenure, what are we looking at in this league?

COMMISSIONER DON GARBER: 30 years is more than a lifetime, more than a generation. We actually look at it in generations. Think of where we were coming out of the World Cup in '94 and the run-up to where Major League Soccer is today: Soon-to-be 30 teams; 26 stadiums; the best player in the world. Imagine I think what it's going to look like: Copa América here next summer, FIFA World Cup in 2025, the World Cup in 2026.

And I think that we have always believed that there's no end to this dream of what soccer in this part of the world could be. I mean, the CONCACAF Gold Cup Final is going on now. We want our region to be formidable to be able to compete with the rest of the world. I think people in the western hemisphere expect nothing less.

I'm glad to be a part of it. I think you guys will be a part of for a really long time.

THE MODERATOR: 2007, David Beckham brought the designated player rule. My question is more as a person than a commissioner: Is this pressure or a privilege now that Lionel Messi is playing here for you?

COMMISSIONER DON GARBER: That's a great thing to think about.

There's always this idea of what's next. I texted my kids who are big soccer fans: Here is the precourse meal, Busquets is just coming out and waving to the fans.

Imagine what this is going to do to the rest of sort of the soccer world. You all know, you are really reporting on our league, this idea that we are a player in the global marketplace, selling players that are developed as homegrown players, being attractive to some of the best

players in the world, having a market that in essence is attracting the interest of the rest of the world.

To your point, our best days are still ahead, and I can't wait to see what it's going to deliver for all of us.

THE MODERATOR: You speak about the global aspect of it, and it feels like this year has really been the turning point in Major League Soccer, Apple buying it, tuning in globally, people around the world can tune in from a click of the remote. What's next?

COMMISSIONER DON GARBER: We are so excited about this partnership -- and by the way, you all are doing a great job. Think of how quickly this all came together.

I was in a media sports conference last week. I'm in my room at ten o'clock at night. I get an alert that Seattle was coming on that St. Louis had an amazing run, as you know, Cincinnati having a great run, and it was right there on my phone. And in essence, it's a new way to consume this sport that we love, and basically this content that all of us really care so much about.

So I think that this is the beginning. It's a long-term partnership. I can't wait.

I've got to give a shout-out: The League is the caretaker of this long train. Tonight is about Jorge Mas, Jose Mas and David Beckham who believe in Major League Soccer. We are going to go to a board meeting on Wednesday and introduce our new ownership group in San Diego.

So many exciting things happening. Owners are really the ones who believe and support all the great energy that we have. So exciting days ahead. Thank you very much, folks.

I'm sure that we are going to have many wonderful experiences, so thank you very much.

