

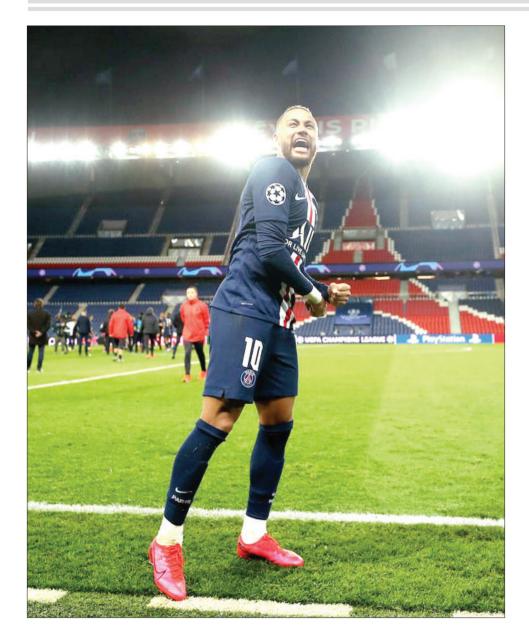
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Neymar aiming to 'make history' with PSG

Neymar is determined to "make history" for Paris Saint-Germain when the Champions League returns in August.

The world's most expensive player has been unable to lead the Ligue 1 champions to European glory up to now, with him having completed a €222 million (£201m/\$248m) move from Barcelona in 2017.

Neymar scored twice in the 3-2 aggregate victory over Borussia Dortmund in the last 16 before the 2019-20 competition was suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic. UEFA plans to stage this season's quarter-finals onwards in a 'mini-tournament' format in Portugal, by which time PSG will not have played for nearly six months, with the Ligue 1 season having been concluded early on a points-per-game basis.

Having won the French title for the third time, Neymar now wants to deliver the Champions League to the capital.

"This period was atypical, but the main focus was to keep safe, with steady body and mind," the Brazil star said via his official website. "I am ready and excited to return, thinking a lot about the Champions League, of course. We have a strong group, conquered a historical qualification, with the same intensity and dedication, but I miss the heat of the game. I can barely wait to enter the pitch and to, if it's God's will, make history."

Neymar's fitness coach Ricardo Rosa has been impressed with the player's dedication to keeping in shape during months of inactivity.

"The main emphasis was Neymar's dedication, effort and performance he had, his focus," Rosa said.

"I've never had the possibility of being three months straight with him and he demonstrated dedication and commitment, excited to do his job, showcasing trust and respect for my work."

The statements from Neymar emphasising his commitment to the PSG cause come a day after it was revealed that the Brazilian has been ordered to pay €6.7m (£6.1m/\$7.5m) to former club Barcelona.

The Catalans, who have been keen on re-signing the forward but now look unlikely to do so given the financial issues of the coronavirus pandemic, saw a judge rule in their favour over a signing-on bonus dispute with their former player.



'I had no bench to react to it!' - Mourinho says Spurs lack substitute options



'Real Madrid won't win everything' - Setien dismisses Pique prediction

to him in the wake of Tottenham's 1-1 draw with Manchester United , saying that he has "no bench to react" to Friday's Premier League return.

Spurs were playing their first match since the coronavirus outbreak, facing off with fellow top-four hopefuls Manchester United in a match that saw the two teams split points behind goals from Steven Bergwijn and Bruno Fernandes.

As a result of the extended break, several key Tottenham players returned to health, with Harry Kane and Heung-min Son returning to the lineup after injuries early this season. However, Mourinho was left without Dele Alli and Lucas Moura on the day, with the former suspended while the latter missed out due to an injury suffered in training.

Without the duo, Mourinho turned to the likes of Gedson Fernandes and Giovani Lo Celso, only using two of the five substitutes permitted as part of the Premier League's return. "Happy with things and unhappy with others," Mourinho told Sky Sports following the draw. "What did I like? I liked the team attitude, organisation, control, being solid. Giving to United what they don't

"Unhappy with the fact that the way I was reading the game I had no bench to react to it. When they became more dominant we were tired up front and could not press."

He added: "The players did fantastic work defensively - they had two dangerous shots that Hugo Lloris saved and nothing else. Everything else was under control. For 70 minutes, when we had the energy, we were strong with the ball and we knew what we wanted to do. "I have to admit for the last 15 minutes I would love to have had Lucas Moura here, Dele Alli here. The last 15 minutes were difficult for us.

"Lucas and Dele are players we need and we could feel that today. When you look to their bench and then to ours the difference in attacking options. Hopefully, they will be back for West Ham because in this moment it is very, very important to change players."

Mourinho pointed to the wealth of options on Manchester United's bench, with his counterpart, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, turning to Paul Pogba, Odion Ighalo, Mason Greenwood, Nemanja Matic and Eric Bailly, with Juan Mata and Jesse Lingard among the unused substitutes. Pique and believes Real Madrid will drop points late in the La Liga season.

Setien's men were held to a 0-0 draw at Sevilla on Friday, giving Madrid the chance to join them on 65 points when they visit Real Sociedad.

Pique said it was hard to see Madrid dropping points in their remaining nine games, but Setien disagreed. "I think that about Pique is the frustration of the moment. We were very confident because we had 30 very good minutes at the beginning of the game and then we got messy," he said, via AS.

"In the second half, we lost balls that gave them life. "Tomorrow, he will surely think differently because I am sure that Madrid will not win everything."

A win against Sociedad on Sunday would send Madrid top of the table thanks to their head-to-head record against Barcelona after their El Clasico victory in March. But Setien, whose side host Athletic Bilbao on Tuesday, is remaining upbeat.

"The rivals always have things to say, there are very tough confrontations and you have to be optimistic," he said. optimistic." Barcelona were on top in the early stages against Sevilla but it was Jules Kounde from the latter who drilled a shot wide early.

It then took two Sevilla players to stop Lionel Messi at the expense of a free-kick on the edge of the penalty area at the 20-minute mark.

Up stepped Messi, and his shot beat the wall and might have beaten Tomas Vaclik too, but the goalkeeper was done a favour by Kounde, who cleared the ball from almost on the line with a flicked header over the bar. Messi tested Vaclik moments later with another freekick, and the goalkeeper was more comfortable second time around.

Inevitably at the centre of things, Messi avoided punishment for shoving Diego Carlos to the ground in first-half stoppage time after the home defender fouled Suarez. Marc-Andre ter Stegen came to Barcelona's rescue early in the second half with a fine parry to deny Lucas Ocampos, the goalkeeper's strong left hand keeping out a thunderous shot from a tight angle to the right of goal. The German thwarted Munir moments later too, pushing away a vicious left-footed strike.