

El Clasico 2012 Pitted The 2 Best Teams & 2 Best Players in The World

Barcelona 2, Real Madrid 2

The first Clasico of the season certainly lived up to all the hype and expectations. As the level of football on display was exhilarating from start to finish and unlike recent clashes between these 2 super teams, there was no sending off of players; not too much diving or play acting; very few incidents of haranguing the referee, and the 2 managers behaved themselves.

Tito Villanova the manager sprung a huge surprise at the start of the game by picking left back Adriano as 1 of his center backs instead of Alex Song or youngster Bartra in place of regular center backs Carlos Puyol the captain who broke his arm and Gerard Pique who failed a late fitness test.

Jose Mourinho had the relatively easier task of picking 1 out of 3 very gifted playmakers in Luka Modric, Kaka or Mesut Ozil. In the end he went for Ozil.

The match itself pitted the 2 most talked about players in the world in Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo as to who is the best in the world and neither disappointed as far as goal scoring was concerned. And with the player that eclipsed both to win European player of the year, Andres Iniesta making his comeback from injury, we had arguably the best 3 players on the planet on show.



Real Madrid made the better start and should have scored when Sergio Ramos was left unmarked from a corner kick but his header just went wide but they took the lead on the 23 rd minute when Karim Benzema found an unmarked Ronaldo on the left hand side and his left foot shot beat Victor Valdes on his near post which would have disappointed him.

Benzema wasted a golden opportunity to make it 2-0 as he hit the post from 9 meters out after good work from Ozil with Angel Di Maria just failing to make a proper connection on the rebound. They were made to pay moments later as Messi made it 1-1 by taking advantage of a mistake by Pepe to smash home the equalizer from 4 meters out.

Up until that goal Real Madrid was the better side but Barcelona started to find their rhythm and confidence with their intricate passing game coming to the fore with the likes of Iniesta, Xavi, Busquets, Fabregas, Pedro and Messi weaving their magic as only they can.

Barcelona went ahead on the 62nd minute when Xabi Alonso brought down Messi for a free kick. From about 20 meters out he curled the ball round the wall and beyond the reach of Iker Casillas to make it 2-1. But within 5 minutes of that goal, Ronaldo made it 2-2 when he beat a poor execution of the offside trap set by Barcelona to latch onto a brilliant through ball by Ozil to drill the ball beyond the reach of Valdes. Ronaldo was playing through pain barrier as he had earlier hurt his shoulder trying a bicycle kick.

Both sides had valid claims for penalties as first Ozil was brought down by Javier Mascherano but the referee waved play on as he did moments later when Pepe caught Iniesta.

Barcelona almost scored in injury time through an unlikely source as Montoya who had come on for the injured Dani Alves in the 1st half hit a brilliant shot that hit the bar. Pedro could also have been a hero when his speed and skill took him past Pepe only for him to drill his shot just wide.

Player ratings

Barcelona

Valdes 6

Alves 5 (Montoya 28 6)

Adriano 6

Mascherano 6

Alba 7

Xavi 7

Busquets 7

Fabregas 6 (Sanchez 68 4)

Iniesta 7

Messi 8

Pedro 6

Real Madrid

Casillas 5

Arbeloa 6

Pepe 7

Ramos 7

Marcelo 7

Alonso 7

Khedira 7

Ronaldo 8

Ozil 7 (Kaka 81 6)

Di Maria 7.5 (Essien 88)

Benzema 5 (Higuain 63 5)

Certainly all of these players have natural talent, but one thing they all have in common is a well-designed training program. If you want to learn how to play like Messi, Ronaldo, Iniesta, Xavi, Ozil, Di Maria, Xabi and all the other great players on these teams you need the right training plan. [Effective training for high level soccer performance](#) involves more than regular technical skill practice (which is essential)... it also necessitates training for conditioning, speed, and agility, as well as a solid nutrition plan and a winning mindset. If you are serious about improving your soccer performance and playing at an elite level then click [here to find out how.](#)

