

# Free-flowing Barca display strengthens Setien's position



Barcelona's players are seen during a training session (file photo)

Reuters | Barcelona

After a harrowing week in which his reputation was dragged through the mud, Barcelona coach Quique Setien came out fighting by overseeing a spectacular 4-1 win away to Villarreal which showed the 61-year-old's coaching abilities are still intact.

The superb display might not be enough to prevent Real Madrid from winning the title as they hold a four-point lead over Barca with four games left, but it was enough to get a vote of confidence from the club's president Josep Maria Bartomeu.

"Today we saw a dynamic Barca who created a lot of chances and they looked like real title

contenders," he told Spanish network Movistar.

"We're going to fight until the end in this league campaign and in the Champions League."

Setien was not the club's first choice to succeed Ernesto Valverde in January and his position has been questioned as the team's title bid unravelled with draws against Sevilla, Celta Vigo

and Atletico Madrid.

His lack of experience in dealing with a dressing room such as Barca's, full of world class players but high maintenance egos, also came under the microscope after he brought Antoine Griezmann on in added time against Atletico.

But his ability to get a team playing truly attractive and ex-



Barcelona coach Quique Setien looks on during a training session

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QUIQUE SETIEN

citing football was finally evidenced against Villarreal, and led Bartomeu to dismiss reports there had been a rift between the coach and players.

"I know there have been rumours going around but they

are completely false," Bartomeu added.

"Quique has the full support of the players and the directors and is doing a great job."

Barca's free-flowing display was sparked by a tactical shift by Setien, who placed Griezmann alongside Luis Suarez in a front two with Lionel Messi as the playmaker, in contrast to previous matches where Griezmann was deployed out on the left wing.

Messi set up goals for Suarez and Griezmann, teeing up the latter's audacious chip with an irresistible backheel.

"I felt truly satisfied with the performance and I'm sure the players did too because they played a great game and enjoyed themselves," Setien explained.

"I would like to play like this in every game but it's not an exact science. Every game is different but today we did everything right."

## Federer 'missing' Wimbledon but aiming to be back next year

Reuters | London

Roger Federer yesterday said he is "missing" Wimbledon after the grass-court Grand Slam was cancelled, but hopes to play the tournament in 2021.

The 38-year-old, who has undergone two knee surgeries this year, had already announced he will not play again until next year.

This week was scheduled to be the second week of Wimbledon, where Federer has won a record eight men's singles titles, but the tournament was cancelled for the first time since World War II due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Personally, it has been very pleasant to stay in the same place for a long time, I hadn't experienced that for more than 25 years," Federer said at the launch of the "Roger Center Court" running shoes created by Swiss brand On.

"But of course I miss Wimbledon, of course I would like to be there currently playing on Centre Court for a place in the second week.

"Clearly, one of my big goals, and that's why I do recovery work every day and work so hard, and why I'm preparing for a 20-week physical preparation block this year, is because I hope to play at Wimbledon



Roger Federer waves to fans after a match (file photo)

next year."

Federer said the coronavirus lockdown gave him the chance to recuperate following surgery, but said he will have to be "patient" as he waits to return to the court.

"Combined with my operations, it was an important moment for me, (to know) if I wanted to continue," he said.

"It's very easy to say but it's a long way to come back, you have to be patient, it also was a time for reflection.

"We were in the mountains, isolated, we didn't see anyone, I didn't see my parents for almost three months, we were very serious and strict."

The ATP and WTA Tours are set to resume in August despite a raft of professional players having contracted COVID-19.

Federer could have lost his record of most men's Grand Slam singles titles by the time he returns, with his old rival Rafael Nadal just one behind on the all-time list.

The US Open will be the first Grand Slam following the restart, getting underway behind closed doors in New York on August 31, before the French Open starts, with fans allowed to attend Roland Garros, on September 24.

The Swiss star will also be hoping to claim Olympic singles gold for the first time next year at the postponed Tokyo Olympics in Japan, with the final to be played a week before his 40th birthday.

## Former Bayern doctor says he quit because Guardiola 'knew better'

AFP | Munich

German Hans-Wilhelm Mueller-Wohlfahrt has said he quit as Bayern Munich team doctor in 2015 amid a spat with Pep Guardiola because the Spaniard "knew better".

"I couldn't put up with the fact that a young coach (Guardiola) -- who was very successful and who is probably one of the very, very big names -- interfered in medical matters and knew everything better than I did," Mueller-Wohlfahrt told broadcaster BR24.

The 77-year-old German has a reputation as one of the world's top sports doctors, whose list of superstar clients included retired sprinter Usain Bolt.

Bolt dedicated his 2016 Olympic gold medal after the men's 100m final to him for helping him overcome a calf injury.

Mueller-Wohlfahrt started working with Bayern in 1977, but resigned abruptly five years ago.

At the time, he said it was because then-Bayern coach Guardiola blamed the club's medical department for a Champions League defeat at Porto.

Mueller-Wohlfahrt only re-



Hans-Wilhelm Mueller-Wohlfahrt (R) and Pep Guardiola during a match (file photo)

turned to Bayern in 2017, after Guardiola had left to join present side Manchester City, and stepped down again as club doctor last month.

However, he refers to his time at Bayern under Guardiola as a "black spot".

Mueller-Wohlfahrt says the pair have since buried the hatchet.

"We have met since and talked things over. It's over now," he added.

Guardiola won the Bundesliga title in each of his three seasons at Bayern from 2013-16 and has since lifted the Premier League trophy twice with Man City.

As well as Bayern, Mueller-Wohlfahrt also worked with the Germany national team from 1995 until after the 2018 World Cup in Russia.