

Real Madrid C.F.



Real Madrid Club de Fútbol, commonly known as Real Madrid) is a professional football club based in Madrid, Spain. It is the most successful team in Spanish football and was voted by FIFA as the most successful club of the 20th century:

- Thirty-one La Liga titles
- Seventeen Spanish Cups
- Nine European Cups
- Two UEFA Cups

Founded in 1902, Real Madrid has since spent all of its history in the top flight of Spanish football. In the 1940s, the club, the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium and the Ciudad Deportiva were rebuilt following the Spanish Civil War. The club established itself as a major force in both Spanish and European football during the 1950s. In the 1980s, the club had one of the best teams in Spain and Europe (known as La Quinta del Buitre), winning two UEFA Cups, five Spanish championships in a row, one Spanish cup and three Spanish Super Cups.

The team traditional home colours are all white, although it initially adopted a blue oblique stripe on the shirt. Its crest has been changed several times in attempts to modernise or re-brand; the current crest is a modified version of the one first adopted in the 1920s. Real's home ground is the 80,354-person-capacity Santiago Bernabéu football stadium in downtown Madrid, where it has played since 1947.

Real Madrid holds long-standing rivalries with some other clubs; the most notable of these is with FC Barcelona, the two teams regularly contesting the El Clásico. Unlike most European football clubs, Real Madrid's members (socios) have owned and operated the club since its inception. The club is the world's richest football club (€351m) in terms of revenue and the second most valuable (worth over €950m as of 2008).

History

Real Madrid started when football was introduced to Madrid by the professors and students of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, which included several Oxbridge graduates. They founded Football Club Sky in 1897, playing on Sunday mornings at Moncloa. It split into two clubs in 1900: New Foot-Ball de Madrid and Club Español de Madrid. The latter club split again in 1902, resulting in the formation of Madrid Football Club on 6 March 1902. Three years after its foundation, in 1905, Madrid FC won its first title after defeating Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish Cup final. The club became one of the founding sides of the Spanish Football Association on 4 January 1909, when club president Adolfo Meléndez signed the foundation agreement of the Spanish FA. After moving between grounds the team moved to the "Campo de O'Donnell" in 1912. In 1920, the club's name was changed to Real Madrid after King Alfonso XIII granted the title of Real (Royal) to the club.

In 1929, the first Spanish football league was founded. Real Madrid lead the first edition until the last match, a loss to Athletic Bilbao meant they finished runners-up to Barcelona. Real Madrid won its first League title in the 1931–32 season. The Whites won the League again the following year, becoming the first side to have won the championship twice.

Crest and colours

The first crest of Real Madrid had a simple design consisting of a decorative interlacing of the three initials of the club, "MCF" for Madrid Club de Fútbol, in dark blue on a white shirt. The first change in the crest occurred in 1908 when the letters adopted a more streamlined form and appeared inside a circle. The next change in the configuration of the crest did not occur until the presidency of Pedro Parages in 1920. At that time, King Alfonso XIII granted the club his royal patronage which came in the form of the title "Real", roughly translated as "Royal". Thus, Alfonso's crown was added to the crest and the club styled itself Real Madrid Club de Fútbol. With the dissolution of the monarchy in 1931, all the royal symbols (the crown on the crest and the title of Real) were eliminated. The crown was replaced by the dark mulberry band of the Region of Castile. In 1941, two years after the end of the Civil War, the crest's "Real Corona", or "Royal Crown", was restored while the mulberry stripe of Castile was retained as well. In addition, the whole crest was made full color, with gold being the most prominent, and the club was again called Real Madrid Club de Fútbol. The most recent modification to the crest occurred in 2001 when the club wanted to better situate itself for the twenty-first century and further standardize its crest. One of the modifications made was changing the mulberry stripe to a more bluish shade.

Stadiums

After moving between grounds the team moved to the "Campo de O'Donnell" in 1912, which remained its home ground for eleven years. After this period, the club moved for one year to the Campo de Ciudad Lineal, a small ground with a capacity of 8,000 spectators. After that, Real Madrid moved its home matches to Estadio Chamartín which was inaugurated on 17 May 1923 with a match against Newcastle United. In this stadium, which hosted 22,500 spectators, Real Madrid celebrated its first Spanish league title. After some successes, the 1943 elected president Santiago Bernabéu decided that the Estadio Chamartín was not big enough for the ambitions of the club. A new stadium was built and was inaugurated on 14 December 1947. This was the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium as it is known today,

although it did not acquire this name until 1955. The first match held on Bernabéu was played between Real Madrid and the Portuguese club Belenenses and won by The Whites with 3–1, the first goal being scored by Sabino Barinaga.

Supporters and rivalries

During most home matches the majority of the seats in the stadium are occupied by season ticket holders, of which there are average of 68,670. To become a season ticket holder one must first be a socio, or club member. Not all members are able to get a season ticket. In addition to members, the club has more than 1,800 peñas (official, club-affiliated supporters' groups) in Spain and around the world. Real Madrid has the first highest average all-time attendance in Spanish football and regularly attract over 65,000 fans to Santiago Bernabéu; it was the second best-supported La Liga team in the 2004–05 season, with an average gate of 71,900.

The club has a large and diverse fanbase, who hold some long-standing rivalries with other clubs; It semiannually contests the El Clásico with FC Barcelona, its most notable rival. Some of Real Madrid's fans are the so-called Ultras Sur supporters. They are known for their right-wing politics. The Ultras Sur have developed an alliance with some S.S. Lazio Irriducibili fans. On several occasions they have racially abused opposing players, and have been investigated by UEFA for doing so.

El Clásico

The rivalry with Barcelona projects what some regard as the political tensions felt between Castilians and Catalans. Madrid is the seat of the government and of the royal family, and, especially during the Francoist era, it came to represent the conservative centripetal forces.

During the 1950s, the rivalry was intensified further when the clubs disputed the signing of Alfredo di Stéfano, who finally played for Real Madrid and was key in the subsequent success achieved by the club. The 1960s saw the rivalry reach the European stage when they met twice at the European Cup, Real Madrid winning in 1960 and Barça winning in 1961. In 2000, the rivalry was reinforced following the controversial decision by Luís Figo to leave Barça and sign for Real Madrid. The two teams met again in the 2002 UEFA Champions League semi-final. Real Madrid, the eventual champion, won the clash dubbed by Spanish media as the Match of the Century. As the two biggest and most successful clubs in Spain, the rivalry is renewed on an annual basis with both teams often challenging each other for the league championship.

El Derbi madrileño

The club's nearest neighbour is Atlético Madrid, which is also seen as a rival by Real Madrid fans. Although Atlético was originally founded by three Basque students in 1903, it was joined in 1904 by dissident members of Madrid FC. Further tensions came because initially Real supporters came from the middle class while the Atlético supporters were drawn from the working class. Today these distinctions are largely blurred. They met for the first time on 21 February 1929 in matchday three of the first League Championship at the former Chamartín. It was the first official derby of the new tournament, and Real won 2–1. The rivalry first gained international attention in 1959 during the European Cup when the two clubs met in the semi-final. Real won the first leg 2–1 at the Bernabéu while Atlético won

1–0 at the Metropolitano. The tie went to a replay and The Whites won 2–1. Atlético, however, gained some revenge when, led by former Real Madrid coach José Villalonga, it defeated The Whites in two successive Copa del Generalísimo finals in 1960 and 1961.

Players

Spanish teams are limited to three players without EU citizenship. The squad list includes only the principal nationality of each player; several non-European players on the squad have dual citizenship with an EU country. Also, players from the ACP countries—countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific that are signatories to the Cotonou Agreement—are not counted against non-EU quotas due to the Kolpak ruling.

Current squad

No.	Position	Player
1	GK	Iker Casillas (vice-captain)
3	DF	Pepe
4	DF	Sergio Ramos
5	MF	Fernando Gago
6	MF	Mahamadou Diarra
7	FW	Raúl (captain)
8	MF	Kaká
9	FW	Cristiano Ronaldo
10	MF	Lassana Diarra
11	FW	Karim Benzema
12	DF	Marcelo
14	MF	Guti (vice-captain)
15	MF	Royston Drenthe
16	DF	Álvaro Arbeloa
17	FW	Ruud van Nistelrooy
18	DF	Raúl Albiol
19	DF	Ezequiel Garay
20	FW	Gonzalo Higuaín
21	DF	Christoph Metzelder
22	MF	Xabi Alonso
23	MF	Rafael van der Vaart
24	MF	Esteban Granero
25	GK	Jerzy Dudek