

## Spanish football suspended indefinitely

10th May, 2015



Lovers of Spanish football are in shock over the sudden suspension of all games in the country from May 16. This means the penultimate and final, and

championship-deciding round of matches in La Liga may not take place. This has happened because of a dispute between the Spanish football federation and TV companies over TV rights. The suspension could affect more than 600,000 football players and 30,000 matches. It could not come at a worse moment for La Liga as Barcelona lead rivals Real Madrid by just two points, with three games left to play. The Copa del Rey final between Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao is also under threat. Officials say there could be time for all parties to resolve their spat.

The dispute is over a new law drawn up by the Spanish government that makes all teams bargain together over TV rights. Currently, the country's top two teams, Barcelona and Real Madrid, are allowed to negotiate their own deals with TV companies. This means they are allotted nearly half of all TV money on offer. The Spanish federation accused the government of a "lack of respect" over interfering in Spanish football. It also complained it had not been consulted properly on the proposed new TV rights law. In another twist, the players' union, the Association of Spanish Footballers, has threatened to strike over being excluded from the negotiations. Barcelona star Lionel Messi and others are backing this threat.

Sources: *BBC.com / EuroSport.com / 90min.com*

## Writing

Football is the best sport in the world. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*shock / suspension / final / matches / dispute / players / worse / moment / officials / government / new law / negotiate / respect / interfering / consulted / properly / threat*

## True / False

- Games in Spain's La Liga will be suspended, but not in other leagues. T / F
- The suspension comes with two rounds of the season remaining. T / F
- Over half-a-million players are affected. T / F
- A final between Barcelona and Athletic Madrid will take place. T / F
- The dispute is because of a proposed law that will affect TV money. T / F
- The top two teams get nearly half of all TV money. T / F
- The government is complaining it was not consulted enough. T / F
- Lionel Messi is refusing to support a proposed players' strike. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. suspension | a. hit          |
| 2. dispute    | b. blamed       |
| 3. affect     | c. altercation  |
| 4. moment     | d. written      |
| 5. resolve    | e. considered   |
| 6. drawn up   | f. time         |
| 7. deals      | g. postponement |
| 8. accused    | h. supporting   |
| 9. consulted  | i. agreements   |
| 10. backing   | j. settle       |

## Discussion – Student A

- Is it fair that Barcelona and Real Madrid get most of the money?
- How would football change if all teams got an equal share of TV money?
- How might the government have shown a lack of respect?
- How might the players' strike affect things?
- Is it right for sport professionals to strike?
- How do you think this dispute will end?
- Do soccer players get paid too much money?
- What questions would you like to ask Lionel Messi?

## Phrase Match

- |                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Lovers of Spanish football are in | a. a worse moment          |
| 2. It could not come at              | b. from the negotiations   |
| 3. three games left                  | c. resolve their spat      |
| 4. under                             | d. properly                |
| 5. time for all parties to           | e. their own deals         |
| 6. all teams bargain together        | f. threat                  |
| 7. allowed to negotiate              | g. are backing this threat |
| 8. it had not been consulted         | h. to play                 |
| 9. excluded                          | i. over TV rights          |
| 10. Lionel Messi and others          | j. shock                   |

## Discussion – Student B

- Which is better, American football or soccer football?
- What do you think of the suspension?
- How good is Spanish football?
- Why do you think this suspension cannot wait until after the final games?
- Is it wrong for governments to get involved in sport?
- What do you think the players think of this dispute?
- What will happen if the final two games are not played?
- How could the parties resolve their spat?

## Spelling

- the sudden isspunnose of all games
- the nmpaietuelt and final...
- because of a uidetps
- the Spanish football erntdfoiae
- also under tahetr
- erlseov their spat
- makes all teams irnbaga together
- allowed to aoeietgnt their own deals
- they are tdteoall nearly half
- scdeauc the government
- it had not been stdcnolue properly
- strike over being clexddue

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. c	3. a	4. f	5. j
6. d	7. i	8. b	9. e	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – Soccer

You think soccer is the most exciting sport. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their sports aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least exciting of these (and why): tennis, cycling or basketball.

### Role B – Tennis

You think tennis is the most exciting sport. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their sports aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least exciting of these (and why): soccer, cycling or basketball.

### Role C – Cycling

You think cycling is the most exciting sport. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their sports aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least exciting of these (and why): tennis, soccer or basketball.

### Role D – Basketball

You think basketball is the most exciting sport. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their sports aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least exciting of these (and why): tennis, cycling or soccer.

## Speaking – Sport

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| • soccer            | • Formula 1 |
| • American football | • tennis    |
| • basketball        | • athletics |
| • cycling           | • skiing    |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.