

Messi bids for World Player hat-trick

Barcelona star Lionel Messi faces tough competition to claim his third consecutive FIFA World Player of the Year award in Zurich on January 9



Lionel Messi, Argentina *Age: 24 Debut: 2003*

Club: Barcelona Position: Forward

Award history: Winner 2010, 2009; 2nd 2008, 2007

Style: Compact, quick, skillful, elusive; arguably among best footballers of all time

2011: Captained Argentina, 4 titles with Barcelona, Champions League top scorer for 3rd year running



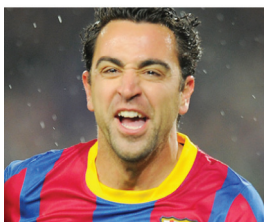
Cristiano Ronaldo, Portugal *Age: 26 Debut: 2002*

Club: Real Madrid Position: Winger / forward

Award history: Winner 2008, 2nd 2009, 3rd 2007

Style: Attacking force, ability to torment best defences with dribbling runs and stunning free kicks

2011: Helped Real to Copa del Rey title, scoring one goal every 70 minutes, amassing over 50 strikes



Xavi, Spain *Age: 31 Debut: 1998*

Club: Barcelona Position: Central midfielder

Award history: 3rd 2010, 2009

Style: Creative playmaker with superb vision, able to retain possession and split defences effortlessly

2011: Became Barcelona's most capped player, vital role in bringing 4 trophies to Nou Camp

ROLL OF HONOUR

*Merged with Ballon d'Or award

1991		Lothar Matthaus	Inter
1992		Marco van Basten	Milan
1993		Roberto Baggio	Juventus
1994		Romario	Barcelona
1995		George Weah	AC Milan
1996		Ronaldo	Barcelona
1997		Ronaldo	Inter
1998		Zinedine Zidane	Juventus
1999		Rivaldo	Barcelona
2000		Zinedine Zidane	Juventus

2001		Luis Figo	Real Madrid
2002		Ronaldo	Real Madrid
2003		Zinedine Zidane	Real
2004		Ronaldinho	Barcelona
2005		Ronaldinho	Barcelona
2006		Fabio Cannavaro	Real
2007		Kaka	AC Milan
2008		Cristiano Ronaldo	Man Utd
2009		Lionel Messi	Barcelona
*2010		Lionel Messi	Barcelona