Tour Circular - Preview

Saturday, 15 July 2017

Barça travel to USA to strengthen its sporting, commercial and charitable expansion

First team’s North American tour to include busy parallel agenda of institutional and social events to take Barça closer to its fans and offer support to the work being done in such a strategic region by the New York office.

Next Wednesday, FC Barcelona travels to the United States for a tour of three East Coast cities (New York, Washington DC and Miami) to play in the International Champions Cup (ICC), a competition organized by Relevent Sport and that brings together the best soccer teams in the world. But the club is not only flying to the US to take part in three games in this top level tournament against Manchester United, Juventus and Real Madrid, for it will also be taking advantage of its ten-day visit to the country to fully showcase its global commercial and brand strategy, as well as the commitment to charity that forms such a key part of its identity and which it channels through its Foundation. That is why the first team’s sporting activities will be running hand in hand with an intense schedule of parallel institutional events in the cities that it visits.

This is the seventh time that Barça has visited the United States in the preseason (the first, eighty years ago in 1937, played a key role in ensuring the club’s very survival), and it all goes to show just what a strategic territory this is as part of the club’s plans for worldwide growth. Since last September, FC Barcelona has had a permanent office in New York (its second overseas branch after the Hong Kong office opened in 2013), the goals of which include the promotion of the Barça brand and getting closer to supporters by setting up such sports projects as the creation of a future franchise to compete in the National Women’s Soccer League, the development of its FCB Escola soccer schools and the opening of two Barça Academies to recruit new talent, as well as work to implement social and charity programs through application of FCB Foundation projects.
Major institutional presence

FC Barcelona will be strongly represented on an institutional level, led by president Josep Maria Bartomeu, who will be joining the team in New York and Miami, while first vice-president Jordi Cardoner will be there throughout the whole trip, in the company of vice-presidents Jordi Mestre and Manel Arroyo and directors Jordi Moix, Javier Bordas, Silvio Elías, Josep Ramon Vidal-Abarca, Enric Tombas and Oriol Tomàs.

Legends represented by Belletti, Henry and Márquez

In addition to the first team players and reinforcements from the reserve squad, former players of such caliber as Juliano Belletti, Thierry Henry and Rafa Márquez will also be featuring in Barça’s trip to the US. The Brazilian, named a club ambassador just a few weeks ago, will be going to all three cities to represent FC Barcelona at all kinds of different sporting and social events, with plenty of involvement of local fans. Meanwhile the Frenchman, who appeared in the MLS with the New York Red Bulls, will be helping to promote the events in that particular city. And Rafa Márquez, another familiar figure in NYC after spending two seasons in the same side as Henry, will be one of many famous faces at the presentation of the Barça Academy on Long Island.

Women’s soccer

Throughout the tour, work will continue on the development plan for women’s soccer in the United States in association with the National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL). This plan is based on the proposal made via Barça’s New York office and its Sports Area to seek participation in that league from 2018, whereby FC Barcelona would be taking a huge step forward with its strategy to consolidate its status as a global brand and at the same strengthen and exemplify its commitment to women’s soccer. FC Barcelona would become the first European club to have a team in North America’s professional soccer league, and its presence would not only help to make this competition even better known, but would raise awareness of Barça and of this sport in the United States.
FCBÉscola

Barça is playing an important role in youth soccer in the United States, with six FCBÉscola schools in the country, in San Diego, Austin, Chicago, Northern Virginia, Charlotte and Florida, as well as forty FCBCamps. During the tour, the FCBÉscolas will be getting the chance to make contact with the first team, with 800 children from FCBÉscola Northern Virginia scheduled to watch Ernesto Valverde and his team train at the FedEx Field, Washington DC. The capital city will also be receiving an institutional visit from the directors and one of the Legends. There will be a similar visit to the FCBÉscola in Miami.

Presentation of Barça Academies

The United States will also be the venue for the club’s first ever Barça Academies, one in Arizona and another on Long Island, to promote talent in such a fast-growing sport in North America. These are aimed at boys and girls aged between 6 and 19 years that are aiming to continue to develop as athletes and hopefully turn professional or receive one of the college sports grants offered by the country’s education system. These youngsters will be coached by staff that have worked at FC Barcelona in recent seasons.

The Barça Academy at Casa Grande, Arizona will be a residential sports facility for athletes aged 12 to 19 years that includes an academic and a sports center. The players on the program will also be competing in the first division of the US Soccer Development Academy, a league involving the 70 biggest clubs in the country. This new residence will bridge the gap between the FCBÉscola programs and collegiate and professional soccer.

The Barça Academy on Long Island will be presented during the tour at an event attended by members of the first team. This project is being run directly by FC Barcelona from its office in downtown New York and will be opening its doors late this summer. The academy’s teams will also be playing in the top official soccer competitions.

In late May, tryouts began to select the first set of players to attend Barça’s Long Island academy. The response was tremendous, with more than 1,500 players taking part, and 600 others left on the waiting list.

Foundation: FutbolNet in New York and Washington

Another goal is to increase the presence in the United States of the Foundation and its projects, such as FutbolNet through agreements with the departments of education in the cities of New York and Washington DC that will be signed during the tour in order to set up this sport and values program in local secondary schools. Last September, on occasion of the opening of the NY office, an event was held at a school in The Bronx to promote
a project that is now about to be fully implemented. Meanwhile, the Foundation will also be hosting a charity gala at the Rockefeller Center in New York City to raise funds for its projects in the United States. Some of the country’s biggest benefactors have been invited to the dinner, which will also be attended by the club’s directors and first team players.

**Barça Innovation, at MIT and Georgetown**

Another of the programs included in the club’s 2015-21 Strategic Plan is the Barça Innovation Hub, the project to create the world’s number one knowledge and innovation center. It will also be featuring in the tour in the form of presentations at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Georgetown University.

**Supporters clubs, loyal as ever**

The team’s supporter’s clubs (known as penyes) will also be playing their part. FC Barcelona has always appreciated the importance of being in touch with such clubs around the world and will be arranging meetings with the Penya FC Barcelona NYC at Smithfield Hall, with representatives of North American penyes at its New York office, and also with the FC Barcelona Supporters Club in Miami.

**Giant human jersey**

As well as all the sporting and institutional events, FC Barcelona’s presence will also very much get noticed thanks to a marketing strategy involving iconic images. These include the forming of a giant human jersey in Bryant Park, right in the heart of Manhattan, on the morning of the Barça fixture against Juventus.

*Virtual image of the giant Barça shirt that will be formed in Bryant Park, New York.*
In New York, a bus decorated in the famous ‘blaugrana’ colors will be visiting the most famous landmarks in the city to make extra sure that people in the Big Apple know that Barça are in town.

Other important marketing activities include the fan zones outside the three stadiums where the team will be playing. Supporters traveling to watch the games will be able to take pictures with the FC Barcelona trophies, test their skills on the ‘shootometer’ get their faces painted and even have their pictures taken with former Barça stars. They will also receive all kinds of FCB themed goodies to help them express their love for the famous colors.

In Miami, one zone will be exclusively dedicated to the game with Real Madrid, and has been called the Casa Clásico, where Barça fans will be able to enjoy an especially ‘blaugrana’ styled soccer experience. And a giant Barça themed sandcastle will be appearing on the beach of one of the country’s most popular seaside destinations.

The ‘other’ Clásico, a major sporting attraction

In purely sporting terms, the US Tour presents a star-studded line-up, with games against Juventus (New York) and Manchester United (Washington) plus a real-life Clásico against Real Madrid in Miami, surely the highlight of the preseason program. Any meeting between these two teams raises huge expectation, and this one is especially historic because it’s only the second time that the clubs have met outside of Spain. The sole precedent was a friendly back on 30 May 1982 in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. So the whole soccer world’s attention will be focused on Miami from July 27 to 29, with the mayor even presenting President Josep Maria Bartomeu with the keys to the city.
FC Barcelona Schedule

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONS CUP USA TOUR 2017/2018

Wednesday 19 July

- 16.00*: Departure of FC Barcelona party on flight IB2836 to Newark Airport, New Jersey. *Central European Time.
- Immediate transfer to Sheraton Parsippany Hotel, New Jersey.

Thursday 20 July

- TBD: Training session at Red Bull Arena Training Center (first fifteen minutes open to the media).
- 17:00: Institutional visit to FC Barcelona office in New York by president Josep Maria Bartomeu, board members and one Legend. (PRIVATE)
- TBD: Training session at Red Bull Arena Training Center.
- 19:00: Welcome Party at Canoe Studios, 601 W 26th St

Friday 21 July

- TBD: Training session at Red Bull Arena.
- TBD: Presentation of FutbolNet program to local authorities. Attended by New York City Schools Chancellor, Carmen Fariña, and board members.
- TBD: Press conference with head coach and one player at Red Bull Arena.
- 17:00: Training session at Red Bull Arena (Open).
- 20:00: Event at Penya FC Barcelona NYC at Smithfield Hall. Attended by Pau Vilanova and Belletti.

Saturday 22 July

- 9:00: Training session or rest at Red Bull Arena Training Center.
- 11.00: Giant human FC Barcelona jersey event in Bryant Park.
- 17:45: Rakuten sponsorship inauguration ceremony at MetLife Stadium.
• 18:00: JUVENTUS vs. FC BARCELONA. International Champions Cup. MetLife Stadium.

• 22:00: Foundation cocktail reception at Rockefeller Center. Attended by first team, and one Legend. (PRIVATE)

**Sunday 23 July**

• TBD: Training session or rest at Red Bull Arena Training Center.

• 13.10: First pitch at Mets vs. Oakland at Citifield. Attended by Thierry Henry.

• TBD: Training session or rest at Red Bull Arena Training Center.

**Monday 24 July**

• 09.30: Presentation of Barça Innovation Hub at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Presented by Javier Sobrino.

• 12:00: Inauguration of Barça Academy Long Island with board members, first team players and Belletti, Henry and Márquez

• 19:00: Training session at Red Bull Arena Training Center.

**Tuesday 25 July**

• 11.00: Departure of Air Miami flight MAI633 to Ronald Reagan Airport, Washington DC. *Eastern Standard Time.*


• TBD: Press conference at FedEx Field.

• TBD: Training session at FedEx Field. Visit by 800 children from FCBescola Northern Virginia (Open).

• 15:45: Cocktail reception with congressmen and women close to the Capitol. Event in association with US Soccer Foundation for the development of soccer in the United States. Attended by Board of Directors and Belletti. (PRIVATE)

• 20.30: Visit to Penya Barcelonista Washington DC.

**Wednesday 26 July**

• TBD: Training session at American University.

• 9:00: Presentation of Barça Innovation Hub at Georgetown University. Presented by Javier Sobrino.

• 9:00: Presentation of FutbolNet to city council, attended by the mayor of the Council of the District of Columbia Washington, Muriel Bowser, and Barça vice-president, Jordi Cardoner.
11:30: Visit to FCB Escola in Loudon County, attended by one member of the Board of Directors and Belletti

19:30: FC BARCELONA vs. MANCHESTER UNITED. International Champions Cup. FedEx Field.

Thursday 27 July

11:00*: Departure of Air Miami flight MAI634 to Miami International Airport. *Eastern Standard Time


TBD: Training session at Barry University.

19.00: Visit to FC Barcelona Supporters Club in Miami.

Friday 28 July

TBD: Training session at Barry University

11:00: Signature of agreement between FC Barcelona Foundation and Miami Dade College. Attended by Jordi Cardoner and Belletti.

12:00: Visit to FCB Escola Miami. Attended by one member of the Board of Directors and Belletti.

TBD: Visit by players to Casa Clásico (Bayfront).

TBD: Press conference at Hard Rock Stadium

TBD: Training session at Hard Rock Stadium. Visit by 400 children from FCBCamp.

18.00: Handing over of the keys to the city of Miami at Hard Rock Stadium.

Saturday 29 July

TBD: Training session or rest at Barry University


22:00: Post-game press conference and player interviews.


Sunday 30 July


*Times of training sessions may be subject to change