



Union des associations européennes de football



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Lionel Messi to collect €100,000 cheque from UEFA on behalf of ICRC

€100,000 raised via uefa.com users' Team of the Year 2009

UEFA will tonight present a cheque for €100,000 to Lionel Messi, who amassed almost 250,000 votes to be named the first-choice striker of the uefa.com users' Team of the Year 2009, to be donated to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

William Gaillard, Adviser to the UEFA President, Michel Platini, will hand over the cheque to FC Barcelona's star player before the start of tonight's UEFA Champions League Round of 16 second leg match between FC Barcelona and VfB Stuttgart at the Camp Nou. For the third time, this money will be going from the hands of the Team of the Year's captain to one of UEFA's long-standing partners, the ICRC, and to their campaign to support landmine victims in Afghanistan.

UEFA began its partnership with the ICRC when it started to support its anti-landmine campaign in 1997. All monies donated have gone to the Score for the Red Cross campaign in support of the ICRC rehabilitation project for landmine victims in Afghanistan (<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/afghanistan?opendocument&link=home>), providing them with artificial limbs, physiotherapy and vocational training.

Ahead of receiving the cheque, FC Barcelona's striker Lionel Messi said:

"It was a great honour for me to be elected in the uefa.com users' Team of the Year 2009. This also helped me realise how lucky I am and how much I can give to less fortunate people around the world. Therefore it is of highest importance to me to present today the cheque for €100,000 to the ICRC, which will support them in helping children who really need it."

Alberto Cairo, who oversees the ICRC's orthopaedic program in Afghanistan said:

"We are very grateful for Lionel Messi's support which helps finance the treatment we provide for hundreds of mine victims and other disabled every year. Football is an inspiration for many Afghans, especially children. Many of them know and admire Lionel Messi."

The uefa.com users' Team of the Year for 2009 was:

Iker Casillas (Real Madrid CF); Daniel Alves (FC Barcelona), John Terry (Chelsea FC), Carles Puyol (FC Barcelona), Patrice Evra (Manchester United FC); Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid CF), Xavi Hernández (FC Barcelona), Kaká (Real Madrid CF), Andrés Iniesta (FC Barcelona); Lionel Messi (FC Barcelona), Zlatan Ibrahimović (FC Barcelona). Josep Guardiola (FC Barcelona).

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