Lionel Messi's Contract with Inter Miami: A Comprehensive Breakdown

By Ivan Parron, Esq

After an illustrious career in European football, Lionel Messi's leap across the pond to join Major League Soccer franchise Inter Miami CF (owned by another football legend, David Beckham) has generated waves of global excitement in the soccer world. While details of Messi's contract were kept under wraps initially, the eventual disclosures made through multiple reports reveal intricate deal points that highlight the Argentine's business acumen and shrewdness. This article aims to unravel the specifics of Messi's contract with Inter Miami and his associated deal with tech giant Apple and Adidas.

The Contract with Inter Miami

Already one of the all-time highest-paid athletes in the world, Lionel Messi signed a two-and-a-half-year deal (plus an option for 2026) with Inter Miam which reportedly could pay him a total of $150,000,000.00 including his salary, signing bonus, and an ownership stake in the club upon his retirement. His annual salary makes him the highest-paid player in the history of MLS by far. This monumental deal also involves performance-related bonuses, potentially pushing Messi's annual earnings beyond $60 million.

An intriguing element of Messi's contract is the 'brand ambassador' role assigned to him. This allows Inter Miami to use Messi's image for promotional and marketing purposes, boosting the franchise's visibility globally. As a brand ambassador, Messi will participate in a certain number of promotional events and campaigns annually, increasing fan engagement and overall franchise value.

Messi's contract also includes a clause about his post-playing career. Inter Miami has ensured that Messi will continue to be associated with the club even after hanging up his cleats. While the specific role is not defined yet, Messi is set to be able to buy into the franchise as an owner and also serve as a mentor for youth players and contribute to the strategic decision-making at the club.

Messi's Apple Deal

In a fascinating overlap of sports and technology, Messi signed a groundbreaking deal with Apple. The American tech giant's involvement adds another dimension to Messi's move to Inter Miami. And if reports are true, all other MLS clubs had to approve the deal.



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As part of the deal, Messi will receive a cut of all new subscriptions to the MLS's Apple streaming service, which is free to season ticket holders but otherwise costs as much as US14.99 per month and US$99.99 for a full year. Apple will also produce exclusive content on Messi's journey at Inter Miami, which will be aired on Apple TV+. This includes a four-part behind-the-scenes documentary series on Messi's life in the US and his experiences in the MLS. The deal secures exclusive broadcast rights of these shows to Apple for the length of Messi's contract with Inter Miami.

As a result, Messi will become a brand ambassador for Apple, likely promoting their products and participating in several marketing campaigns. Messi's international stature and vast fanbase can contribute to Apple's global marketing efforts and venture into live sports, making this a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Adidas Connection

Messi also extended his long-standing association with Adidas. He was first sponsored by them in an exclusive shoe deal in 20026 and signed a life-time contract in 2017. Adidas has been exclusively supplying kits (uniforms) for all MLS teams since 1996. Messi has been playing in Nik-branded kits for his entire career so the opportunity to have Messi exclusive for both his kit and cleats was a dream-come-true for the German show company. Messi will feature prominently in Adidas' global advertising campaigns, further strengthening their partnership and most importantly it is reported that Messi will be receiving a revenue share of kit sales driven by his move to MLS.

The Marvel-ous Twist

In a creative twist, Messi's association with Adidas and Inter Miami culminated in a unique collaboration with Marvel. Leveraging Marvel's storytelling prowess and Adidas' sportswear expertise, a special edition jersey was released. The jersey, embellished with Marvel iconography and Messi's name, celebrates the blend of soccer and popular culture, adding a new dimension to fan merchandise.

Impact on MLS and American Soccer

Messi's arrival at Inter Miami could have a significant impact on the growth of soccer in the US. High-profile player acquisitions, like Inter Miami owner David Beckham in the past, have contributed to the growing popularity of MLS in the US. Messi, arguably one of the greatest players in the history of the sport, can further elevate the status of MLS globally and attract more international talent to the league.

Moreover, Messi's post-retirement role at Inter Miami might include youth development programs. His involvement could improve the standard of



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youth soccer in the US, inspiring and training the next generation of American soccer players.

The Commercial Angle

The commercial implications of Messi's contract with Inter Miami are enormous. From ticket sales to merchandise, Messi's brand power is likely to result in substantial financial gains for the franchise.

Messi also has an existing relationship with the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, just a couple of miles from Inter Miami's stadium, promoting the "Messi Burger" as well as selling Messi-branded merchandise.

Furthermore, his deal with Apple can indirectly boost Inter Miami's finances. The documentary series on Messi's journey might increase the team's global exposure and attract more fans and sponsors. Apple's involvement could also set a precedent for other tech companies to invest in MLS, opening up new revenue streams for the league.

Conclusion

Lionel Messi's move to Inter Miami and his contract details reveal a strategic approach that transcends the sport. While the financial aspects of the deal are significant, Messi's influence extends beyond dollars and cents. His ambassadorial role with Inter Miami, the youth development clause, the Adidas deal and the Apple deal all indicate Messi's commitment to boost the sport's growth in the US.

It's not just about Messi playing in the MLS; it's about him shaping the future of soccer in America. With Messi now playing in the US, the sport could experience unprecedented growth in popularity, quality, and commercial success.

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