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## Bleacher report barcelona vs manchester united

0 out of 12Jasper Juinen/Getty ImagesAs you all know, the biggest game of the season will be played on Saturday. After a long, hard season in which both teams excelled, Barcelona and Manchester United will fight for the European title. And who better to do a comprehensive preview of the game than your real and Manchester United supporter, and B/R acclaimed Featured Columnist, Yoosof Farah.Yoosof and I decided to team up to do what is undoubtedly (really, there's no point arguing) the best recent preview on the internet. There are 22 questions covering pretty much everything (the 2009 final, the road to the finals this year, how both teams have evolved, tactical analysis, important matchups ... you mention it, and it's there). We hope you enjoy it. Don't forget to read part two too. 1. Is this the final you had predicted at the beginning of the season?1 by 12Michael Regan/Getty ImagesManuel TraqueteWell, I would lie if I said I was sure these two teams would meet in the final, but I definitely saw a repeat of the 2009 final as an opportunity and it's not hard to understand why. These are arguably the two strongest teams in Europe at the moment and they have been dominant both in their countries and in the European stage for some time. It was therefore very conceivable that Barcelona and Manchester United could meet again in the final. Yoosof FarahFrom the beginning, I don't think there was any doubt FC Barcelona would be making the final; Hercules game aside, they started the season again at such a high standard. The only question was who would join them in the Champions League final. Would it be Real Madrid, who looked like a much better team under Jose Mourinho? Or would it be Chelsea, Carlo Ancelotti's high-flying Blues who continued in much the same vein as their Premier League and FA Cup-winning season earlier? At the beginning of the season, there weren't many high hopes for Manchester United - myself included.2. Did these teams deserve to reach the final?2 by 12David Ramos/Getty ImagesMTNo. Barcelona came here because of referees, cheating, diving, UEFA, UNICEF, Villarato, doping, wikileaks ... you mention it. United, on the other hand, came here because of luck, Howard Webb (he didn't really officiate United's Champions League matches, but United would have been relegated a long time ago without him, therefore ineligible to participate in the Champions League) and Fergie time. Or at least this is the common belief among Mourinho, the Madrid media and the fans of Manchester United's domestic rivals. On a serious note, of course they both deserve to be in the final. They easily won their groups and barely broke a sweat in the knockout stages, while winning their domestic leagues. It is hard to argue that Barcelona and Manchester United do not deserve to fight for the European title. YF Indefinite. Barcelona did, of course, especially after overcoming the negative tactics of Real Madrid and completely obliterating Arsenal and Shakhtar which is very much a task easier said than done. As for Manchester United, Marseille, an under-par Chelsea and an even worse Schalke 04 were not exactly the hardest of opponents on the road to Wembley; Yet they beat everything that challenged them - especially Schalke, which they destroyed. That's why they also deserve their place in the final at home in football.3. Who had the easiest way to the final?3 by 12Jasper Juinen / Getty ImagesMT: I have to say Manchester United.Barcelona's path was not easy at all; They made it easy with sublime Lionel Messi-inspired performances. Shakhtar Donetsk and Real Madrid are both good teams (especially the latter), but they were both pretty much looking for the first leg. In the first round Arsenal caused some problems by winning the first leg at the Emirates, but the second leg proved to be arguably the most one-sided match in Champions League history. Manchester United were much luckier in the draw as far as I'm concerned. Marseille and Schalke are not exactly world-beating teams and Manchester United had no trouble getting past them. But they can only beat what is set in front of them and they were clearly superior in all the ties that led to the final, thus justifying their presence at Wembley.YFManchester United did, definitely. Unlike Barca, the teams they were playing were not in good shape at the time and had less world-class ball players on their teams.4. Has Mourinho's allegations of a Pro-Barcelona conspiracy keep any water?4 of 12MTAv course does not. They are just excuses for a very sore loser and should not be taken seriously in any way. Barcelona eliminated Real Madrid because they were better during the 180 minutes of the draw, and because they have in Lionel Messi the world's best player to unlock difficult matches with moments of sheer brilliance. That's all. All allegations of conspiracies, cheating, etc ... is no more than background noise. YFNot in my view they do not. Mourinho's claims are a great way to undermine Barca's success and an attempt to mentally damage the team. I think more than anything, Jose Mourinho tried to psychologically derail the Barcelona juggernaut.5. Do you think domestic form will have any impact on the finals?5 of 12Shaun Botterill / Getty ImagesMTIkk really. Finals are very special games; all that matters is how both teams play during the 90 (maybe 120) minutes. It doesn't matter that Barcelona had another extraordinary season in La Liga or that Manchester United won all their home games in the Premier League. The only determining factor is how both teams will be, physically and mentally, during the match itself. YFDomesian form will be an influence. Yes, it's a one-off game, but if you go into that game on good form, having scored a few goals and conceded less, it happens on the pitch. It gives you more confidence, especially when you go a goal down. Players would look back to their latest games, remembering their ability to win no matter what further trust from it.6. What about European form?6 by 12David Ramos / Getty ImagesMTIt's the same. What's done is done. Past results don't matter anymore. That said, it is reasonable to mention that both teams have had extraordinary European campaigns. United have not lost yet and have not conceded a single goal away. Barcelona have only one defeat so far ... in London no less. But in those 90 minutes, none of it will matter. YFEuropean form will actually have less of an impact in my view, because the semi-final was played a few weeks ago and the games will not be as fresh in memory of the players as the most recent ones played. But of course, especially where Barcelona are concerned, form in the Champions League will be a factor- especially if they go behind to United. After all they have beaten Real Madrid, they have beaten Arsenal - who is to say they can't beat Manchester United??7. How will Ryan Giggs' Super Injunction Affect the Red Devils??7 by 12Michael Regan/Getty ImagesMTI, for one, doesn't think it will affect as much, at least as far as United's dressing room is concerned. I'm sure everyone will support Giggs, and there will be no internal rift. If anything, they'll be looking to play extra hard to win it for Giggs.Much like people like to blow it out of proportion, what Giggs did was kind of normal. He wasn't the first either not to be the last man to cheat on his girlfriend/wife. In fact, I am willing to bet that some of those who were so quick to criticize Giggs have been guilty of this very pity at some point in their lives. I'm pretty sure nothing will change inside United's dressing room; they will all treat Giggs as they did before. Of course, that player himself, who is human and everything, will be a little affected (after all, that's his personal life we're talking about) and Alex Ferguson will have to decide whether he should play him or not. YFRyan Giggs' super toppings will have a huge effect on him personally, but not so much the United team. The sense of hostility towards Giggs from the general public has increased massively and he will feel it from the stands if he plays. People are not happy at all about what he did. But even if it would affect him, the rest of United would undoubtedly distance themselves from such things ahead of such a big occasion, so I doubt it would have much impact on them. 8. Lionel Messi v Wayne Rooney (Question Below)8 by 12Claudio Villa/Getty ImagesSky Italy have billed this match as a match of the world's best player (Messi) vs. the world's most complete player (Rooney). Do you agree? MTWell, Messi is definitely the world's best player, no competition there. But I don't think Rooney is the most complete player in the world. That title also belongs to Messi; There is pretty much nothing that the Argentine prodigy can't do, and no attacking/midfield position where he doesn't wreak havoc. There is nothing wrong with Rooney; He is certainly one of the world's Players. But Messi is in a whole level; He's a once-in-a-generation player. Despite his very young age, with the dominance Messi has shown in recent years, the only thing worth questioning is who the second best player in the world is. Can Rooney be part of that discussion? When he's at his best game, yes. Last season Rooney showed what a dominant goalscorer he can be, and this season he showed how complete his game is. He will be the biggest danger to Barcelona's defence in Saturday's final. YFI agrees. Undoubtedly Lionel Messi is the best player in the world, able to beat defenders left, right and centre, with such mesmerizing ball control, outstanding footwork and brilliant technique. In addition, his finishing ability inside the penalty area is truly unprecedented. As for Wayne Rooney, he is definitely the most complete player. Rooney is able to be in the right place to score tap-ins while in the same game rifling home screams from 25 yards, Rooney is great as a striker, but he is much more than that. His movement when he falls deep smartly pulls defenders out of position, while his long-range passing becomes more and more like Paul Scholes.And of course, such is the energetic player he is, he is always able to make his presence felt when he defends as well. Wayne Rooney is arguably the most complete player in the world.9. What were the keys to Barcelona's win in the 2009 Final?9 by 12Paul Gilham/Getty ImagesMTXavi and Iniesta, hands down. There are days where even Messi is outshined by these two wonderful midfielders. The 2009 final was one of them. At the end of the match, Wayne Rooney claimed United had lost to a team led by the world's best player. And no, he was referring not to Messi, but to Andrés Iniesta.Barcelona's creative duo barely set foot wrong and set the pace throughout the match. United's midfield and defence could never get close to them. That said, the first 10 minutes belonged to United, and had they scored in this period, everything would have been different. The first goal by Samuel Eto'o was the key moment. Barcelona took the lead and never looked back since. YFKey was probably the target Samuel Eto'o scored after 10 minutes. Until then it was all Manchester United, coasting as they constantly pushed Barcelona with an air of certainty that they would score the opener circulating. Out of the blue, Eto'o puts this seemingly comfortable United side behind them in the game, and with that came a hugely demoralising blow. United thought they had the game under control, then suddenly this Barca team scores and starts playing full of confidence. It was something United couldn't handle that night.10. How have both teams changed since that final?10 of 12Alex Livesey/Getty ImagesMTBoth teams have improved, I think. Managers are the same, the core of the teams and the football philosophies as well, but there have been minor improvements at least. Manchester United have become a more coherent and dangerous without Cristiano Cristiano and Carlos Tevez. Both the Portuguese and the Argentine are among the world's best forwards, but Sir Alex Ferguson has shown over the years that you don't need the best players in the world to have the best team. While the overall level of talent may have been smaller, the team has improved. They have multiple attacking threats and can beat you in so many ways... They showed it by winning the Premier League and advancing to another Champions League final. Barcelona have also improved. Their high pressure is more effective than ever, as is their ball retention-hard as it might seem to believe. Busquets, Pedro and David Villa have all added something big to the team. Barcelona still score plenty of goals, but they have also beaten defensive records this season. They are even harder to beat than in 2009. Messi is even better now, a frightening thought. Since the final, Manchester United have become a stronger unit psychologically, underlined by their Premier League title win this season despite a barrage of critics. As for Barcelona, they have just become an even more experienced team, with players who really know they are the best in the world now, especially considering they now have seven World Cup winners in their team.11. Will playing at Wembley be an advantage for United?11 by 12Jan Kruger/Getty ImagesMTYes, they will play almost at home and they know the stadium better than Barcelona, so it is obviously an advantage. But a very slim one, I think. After all, both teams will have the same number of fans there, and Wembley means a lot to Barcelona and Pep Guardiola. It was at the old Wembley Stadium in 1992 that Pep Guardiola lifted Barcelona's first European Cup. YFManchester United will have a huge advantage to play at Wembley. Unlike Barca, they have played on the grass in cup finals many more times and would now know exactly how the ball plays off the grass and how to cope on the pitch so not to pick up injuries (Michael Owen's Carling Cup final injury in 2010 is a good example of how injuries on that pitch happen). Barcelona won't know it and it's not something you can just pick up training on the pitch for a day or two.12 of 12We hope you've had it so far. Read part 2 as well, for tactical analysis, match-ups and much more. More.

