

El Classico - The Barcelona Symphony Orchestra - conducting Leo Messi

Last night I went, this time by myself, to watch what was touted as the biggest football (soccer) match of the entire year 2011. The El Classico as it is known. It is the year-end meeting between Real Madrid and Barcelona. The Madrid and Barcelona rivalry is likely unmatched in world football. I squeezed myself and I mean squeeze into the largest rowdiest Sports Bar within walking distance of our Tel-Aviv apartment. By 10 PM (game starts at 11PM) there was one seat left in the house literally 50 cm in front of a humongous HD TV screen 120 inch wide with resolution such that you could count the sweat droplets on the players' faces. The only seat left wouldn't you know at a table full of Real Madrid fans.



I declared my alliance early on in joining them. I am a Barca fan and I scream and yell during the game in support of my team. If you don't like it you can leave now. They collectively (all either just before or just after drinking age) looked at me and I read their message loud and clear: Shut up you old man or we break your bones. I am not here to fight but if I have to - bring it on (I thought to myself) but that's not what came out of my mouth. Instead it was "I beg you - please no violence". I speak Hebrew but I'm also Canadian and Canadian's are nice people - so PLEASE!!!



26 seconds into the match Victor Valdes (Barca's goalkeeper) makes the worst mistake he ever made since playing kindergarten football by clearing the ball (with plenty of time I might add) directly to a Real Madrid player whose deflected shot was flicked over the panic stricken Valdes for a GOAL!!!!!! by Benzema or as he is known in Hebrew ... I have never heard so many Na, Na, Na, Nana... heralded at me. You stupid old man - what do you know? I responded sheepishly that my wife the all knowing all seeing promised me before I left a final score of Barca 2 Real Madrid 1 and therefore there is plenty of time before she could be wrong. You have a wife?! Yack, they responded in unison and she knows more than you do about football? Shame on you! The match proceeded and Barca was able to collect its panicked self and patiently returned to their famous short passing triangles with accurate, measured penetrating passes through the middle mostly by Xavi and Messi. 30 minutes in and Messi picks up the ball at the half way line and runs circles around 2 or 3 Madrid defenders only to slip the ball to open Alexis Sanchez on the 18 yard line for him to connect with a powerful shot to the low left corner. GOAL!!!!!! 1:1 . My wife may be right you know I turned to my friends whose faces were showing signs of concern to say the least. A TV crew was at the bar and interviewed me amongst others and in front of my nemesis Real fans I uttered into the microphone with a tremblingly (fear) confident voice: It's Barca 2:1 - I have it on good authority you can bet on it. Besides look at the dynamics Barca put that huge mistake behind it and are getting into that famous rhythm. Real beware.



Second half and a beer later Barca scores again and it's now 2:1. Once again Messi in the mix and Xavi's deflected shot eludes Castilas (Real goalkeeper) who already committed himself to the opposite corner of the net. WOW!!! My friends couldn't believe that a mature (euphemism for OLD) man like me could behave in such a crazed manner, screaming and fist pumping like a Tiger (used to do). By now I knew that it was all over for Real. Barca began the second overture of the symphony and there was no stopping them. The conductor's hair were flowing in the wind (although it was raining cats and dogs) and wouldn't you know at 65 minutes or so Messi sets up Alvez on the right wing for a Fedex delivery to Cesc Fabergras who heads it in with the momentum carrying forward powerfully into the net. 3:1 Barca - what a goal!! This was the time when my friends began to acknowledge that it was adios time for Real Madrid. The old man regained his confidence but did not rub it in for fear of a violent outburst. The (much) better team (definitely on the day but probably the best team in the world today) won!!!

What a night? What a game? It's a beautiful game or as the Brasilians would say it it THE Beutiful Game!

When I came home there was only one thing I could say to my wife who was already fast asleep when she asked me how was the game: " You know nothing about football - it was 3:1!!!



and a few minutes after the game I found this trending topic on Trendspottr:

<http://trendspottr.com/?q=el+classico&l=all>