

SOCCER

# Hainan getting a bit of Barcelona

La Liga giant, Mission Hills Group teaming up to build new academy

By **XU JINGXI** in Haikou  
xujingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

For years, millions of Chinese soccer fans have dreamed of a hometown Lionel Messi. A Barcelona-backed soccer academy to be launched this summer in Haikou, capital of South China's island province of Hainan, might help make that dream a reality.

The Spanish La Liga giant and Mission Hills Group, known for its world-class golf resorts, have signed a partnership to break ground on a joint-venture soccer academy. It will have seven pitches and accommodation for 1,000 boys and girls from six to 18 years of age.

The Haikou facility will be Barcelona's 26th overseas academy, and for the first time the club will dispatch its own technical staff to directly manage it.

"Playing a bigger role in this academy reflects the size of importance that Barcelona puts on this project and helps ensure that kids in Haikou can receive the same training that we use in La Masia," said Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu.

Founded in 1979, La Masia, the club's youth academy, has spawned dozens of star players, including the three finalists for the 2010 Ballon d'Or: Messi, Andres Iniesta and Xavi.

La Masia is regarded as a significant factor in Barcelona's European success as well as the Spanish national team's 2010 World Cup triumph.

By building facilities up to the standards of La Masia and emphasizing the Barcelona training philosophy of pass-and-move, the Haikou academy will aim to replicate the success of La Masia in China.

The Chinese Football Association issued mid- and long-

term plans for the sport's development last year, setting goals of 50 million people playing soccer on a daily basis by 2020, having a top-notch national team by 2030 and growing into a global soccer power by 2050.

China's national men's team is currently ranked 86th in the world. To make a great leap, the central government is vigorously promoting soccer education on university campuses and plans to have 50,000 soccer-focused schools by 2025, the Ministry of Education said last week.

Foreign soccer clubs are also actively involved in China's youth soccer education, with prestigious clubs like Barcelona, Real Madrid, Arsenal and AC Milan flocking to the country to open academies and youth training camps in recent years.

"I would take it as cooperation rather than competition; it's good to have so many people engaging in youth soccer training, which will be of great help to increase our soccer level," said Ken Chu, chairman and chief executive officer of Mission Hills Group.

Bartomeu singled out the significance of the project. "Our cooperation with Mission Hills will be a long-term project that lasts for 10 years, even 20 years, which is a big difference from other football academies in China," he said.

"More and more European players have come to play in the Chinese Super League, but by improving youth training, hopefully we can have more hometown talent playing in the Super League and even European leagues.

"I'm sure we will see a graduate from our Haikou academy playing for Barcelona in the future."



**Brazilian soccer star** Ronaldinho, who serves as ambassador for his former club Barcelona, shakes hands with local kids during his visit to Haikou, Hainan province, last week. Barcelona and the Mission Hills Group are working together to open a major soccer academy on the island and set up a long-term plan to develop the sport at the grassroots level throughout China.
YANG GUANYU / XINHUA



“(Barcelona) helps ensure that kids in Haikou can receive the same training that we use in La Masia.”

**Josep Maria Bartomeu.**  
Barcelona president

## Kids hold key to future success

By **XU JINGXI** and **CHEN XIANGFENG**

Pass the ball. Move forward. Take a pass. Dribble ... break through ... shoot ... goal!

Twelve primary school kids impressed a group of spectators — including Brazilian star Ronaldinho — with a demonstration of classic Barcelona-style soccer during 3-on-3 games on a small pitch at the Mission Hills golf complex in Haikou, Hainan Island.

Pau Lopez, project director of the Barcelona soccer academy that will open later this year in Haikou, ran with the young players, barking out instructions in his limited Chinese.

"We are still observing and evaluating the level of young Chinese players and will design a training system specially for them to provide comprehensive instruction in techniques and their understanding of the game," said Lopez, who will head the coaching team and has vowed to take Chinese language lessons.

The Barca academy in Haikou will be a clone of La Masia in terms of both facilities and training philosophy. Besides boarding students who aspire to become professional players, the academy will also host summer camps and weekend courses.

"Our first step is to touch as

many people as possible and make everybody play football. The knowledge and engagement needs to raise up before we can scout talent," said Toni Claveria, project director for Asia and Oceania of FCBarcelona, the official soccer school of Barcelona.

"What China's youth training system needs most is time," he said. "China is vigorously developing football. This is a good start, so we have come to join."

According to Ding Hui, director of the provincial sports authority of Hainan, China's chances of becoming a global soccer power depend on the sport's development

### Why Hainan?

Why is Barcelona putting a soccer academy in Hainan? For starters, it's an ideal site for winter training and has good air quality. Ding Hui, director of the sports authority of Hainan, said 14 clubs from home and abroad held winter training camps on the island over the past several months.

The provincial government of Hainan has written the sports industry into its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20) as one of its 12 key industries. The government is also encouraging private investment in the development of soccer-related industries.

Soccer is popular on the island, with an U12 girls team in Qiongzong Li and Miao autonomous county winning the championship at the Gothia Cup in Sweden in 2015 and 2016.

Besides the academy, a 7,000-square-meter "Barcelona Experience" center will also be opened in Mission Hills' complex in Haikou, featuring exhibits and club merchandise.

XU JINGXI

GOLF

## Tiger poses a puzzle for Nicklaus

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Florida — Jack Nicklaus said he was "painting a picture" when he suggested after a practice round with Tiger Woods at the 1996 Masters that the then 20-year-old had the skill to win at least 10 green jackets.

On Sunday at the Honda Classic, Nicklaus referred to Woods as a "puzzle".

In an interview before mak-

ing an appearance in the NBC broadcast booth, Nicklaus was raving about the growing number of young players who can win major championships. He said they learned to win because Woods no longer is dominant as he recovers from a litany of injuries.

"Right now, I don't know about Tiger," Nicklaus said. "That is the biggest puzzle to

me. I just don't know where he is and where his mind is. I don't know."

Woods missed the cut at Torrey Pines in his 2017 debut, then flew halfway around the world to Dubai and withdrew with back spasms after a 77.

He withdrew from the Genesis Open at Riviera, hosted by his foundation, and this week's Honda Classic.

Woods canceled an interview at Riviera, with his agent, Mark Steinberg, saying doctors had advised Tiger to limit all activities.

Nicklaus referenced a quote from Steinberg that a media conference would yield no answers to his health.

"I think he's absolutely right," Nicklaus said. "You're going to ask him the



“That is the biggest puzzle to me. I just don’t know where he is and where his mind is. I don’t know.”

**Jack Nicklaus,** on Tiger Woods' current status

same exact questions, it'll be the same exact answers that he gave before. And I think from his standpoint, he's tired of answering them."

Nicklaus and Woods have long been linked, from the time Woods posted a chart in

his room showing a timeline of Nicklaus achieving various mileposts in golf, mostly as an amateur.

As a professional, Woods was on pace to break Nicklaus' record 18 majors until his fourth knee surgery in 2008

following the US Open, his 14th and last major. A scandal in his personal life unfolded a year later, followed by more leg injuries and then three back surgeries.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scoreboard

ALPINE SKIING

World Cup men's super-G

Results from Kvitfjell, Norway on Sunday:

1. Peter Fill (ITA) 1:32.83

2. Hannes Reichelt (AUT) 1:32.93

3. Erik Guay (CAN) 1:33.06

4. Aleksander Aamodt Kilde (NOR) 1:33.19

5. Beati Feuz (SUI) 1:33.20

6. Martin Caceres (SLO) 1:33.27

7. Kjetil Jansrud (NOR) 1:33.31

8. Bostjan Kline (SLO) 1:33.58

9. Mauro Caviezel (SUI) 1:33.59

10. Manuel Osborne-Paradis (CAN) 1:33.64

World Cup super-G standings (after five of six events)

1. Kjetil Jansrud (NOR) 365 pts (winner of super-G crystal globe), 2. Aleksander Aamodt Kilde (NOR) 239, 3. Hannes Reichelt (AUT) 203, 4. Dominik Paris (ITA) 197, 5. Peter Fill (ITA) 190

World Cup overall standings (after 30 of 36 events)

1. Marcel Hirscher (AUT) 1275 pts, 2. Kjetil Jansrud (NOR) 871, 3. Alexis Pinturault (FRA) 843, 3. Henrik Kristoffersen (NOR) 843, 5. Peter Fill (ITA) 577, 6. Aleksander Aamodt Kilde (NOR) 570, 7. Felix Neureuther (GER) 525, 8. Manfred Moelgg (ITA) 477, 9. Dominik Paris (ITA) 473, 10. Hannes Reichelt (AUT) 456

BASKETBALL

Results of the National Basketball League games on Sunday (home team in CAPS):

MILWAUKEE 100 Phoenix 96

San Antonio 119 LA LAKERS 98

Memphis 105 DENVER 98

Utah 102 WASHINGTON 92

Boston 104 DETROIT 98

TORONTO 112 Portland 106

OKLAHOMA CITY 118 New Orleans 110

LA CLIPPERS 124 Charlotte 121 (OT)

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	38	21	.644	—
Toronto	35	24	.593	3
New York	24	35	.407	14
Philadelphia	22	36	.379	15½
Brooklyn	9	49	.155	28½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington	34	23	.596	—
Atlanta	32	26	.552	2½
Atlanta	27	31	.468	8
Charlotte	25	34	.424	10
Orlando	22	38	.367	13½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	40	17	.702	—
Chicago	30	29	.508	11

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	45	13	.776	—
Houston	42	18	.700	4
Memphis	35	25	.583	11
Dallas	23	35	.397	22
New Orleans	23	37	.383	23

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	37	22	.627	—
Oklahoma City	34	25	.576	3
Denver	26	33	.441	11
Portland	24	34	.414	12½
Minnesota	23	36	.390	14

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Golden State	49	9	.845	—
LA Clippers	36	23	.610	13½
Sacramento	25	34	.424	24½
LA Lakers	19	41	.317	31
Phoenix	18	41	.305	31½

z-clinched division

ICE HOCKEY

Results of the National Hockey League games on Sunday (home team in CAPS):

Boston 6 DALLAS 3

Calgary 3 CAROLINA 1

Columbus 5 NY RANGERS 2

NASHVILLE 5 EDMONTON 4

CHICAGO 4 ST. LOUIS 2

Ottawa 2 FLORIDA 1

ARIZONA 3 BUFFALO 2

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	62	33	21	8	74	172	160
Ottawa	60	33	21	6	72	160	157
Boston	62	32	24	6	70	172	165
Toronto	61	28	20	13	69	189	182
Florida	61	28	23	10	66	155	172
Tampa Bay	60	27	25	8	62	166	170
Buffalo	62	26	26	10	62	152	176
Detroit	60	24	26	10	58	150	178

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	61	41	13	7	89	203	133
Pittsburgh	60	38	14	8	84	211	168
Columbus	60	39	16	5	83	199	145

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Minnesota	59	39	14	6	84	198	138
Chicago	62	39	18	5	83	187	159
Nashville	62	31	22	9	71	183	173
St. Louis	61	31	25	5	67	172	177
Winnipeg	63	28	29	6	62	184	199
Dallas	62	24	28	10	58	173	201
Colorado	60	17	40	3	37	121	199

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
San Jose	61	36	18	7	79	170	145
Edmonton	63	33	22	8	74	181	166
Anaheim	63	32	21	10	74	162	161
Calgary	63	33	26	4	70	169	177
Los Angeles	61	30	27	4	64	150	151
Vancouver	61	26	29	6	58	143	176
Arizona	61	22	37	7	51	148	196

GOLF

US PGA Honda Classic

Leading final-round scores on Sunday in the US PGA Honda Classic at par-70 PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida (USA unless noted):

268- Rickie Fowler 66-66-65-71

272- Morgan Hoffmann 68-67-69-68, Gary Woodland 71-66-66-69

273- Jhonattan Vegas (VEN) 67-73-69-64, Billy Horschel 70-68-67-68, Chad Collins 70-67-67-69, Wesley Bryan 64-67-72-70, Martin Kaymer (GER) 65-70-68-70, Tyrrell Hatton 68-67-66-72

274- Graham DeLaet (CAN) 66-68-70-70

275- Paul Casey (ENG) 68-70-67-70, Anirban Lahiri (IND) 65-68-71-71, Sean O'Hair 66-72-65-72

276- Nick Watney 71-67-73-65, Adam Scott (AUS) 68-69-71-68, Brendan Steele 73-65-70-68, Graeme McDowell (NIR) 72-67-68-69, Sergio Garcia (ESP) 68-71-66-71, Francesco Molinari (ITA) 68-69-67-72, Jason Dufner 71-66-67-72

277- J.J. Spaun 68-68-72-69, Louis Oosthuizen (RSA) 70-70-68-69, Scott Stallings 67-68-71-71, Lucas Glover 69-69-68-71, Jimmy Walker 70-69-65-73, Brandon Haggy 67-73-64-73

Joburg Open

Leading final round scores from the Joburg Open at Royal Johannesburg and Kensington Golf Club Sunday. The tournament was reduced from 72 holes to 54 because of bad weather (RSA unless noted):

200- Darren Fichardt 66-66-68

201- Stuart Manley (WAL) 67-67-67, Paul Waring (ENG) 65-67-69

202- Jacques Kruyswijk 63-70-69, James Morrison (ENG) 68-68-66, Brandon Stone 70-65-67

203- George Coetzee 66-72-65, Keenan Davids 67-68-68, Paul Peterson (USA) 62-72-69, Aaron Rai (ENG) 65-69-69

204- Louis de Jager 70-67-67, Romain Langasque (FRA) 65-71-68, Jaco Prinsloo 67-70-67, Sebastian Soderberg (SWE) 66-70-68

Honda LPGA Thailand

Leading top scores from the Honda LPGA Thailand at Pattaya's Siam Country Club on Sunday:

266- Amy Yang (KOR) 66-67-65-68

271- Ryu So-yeon (KOR) 69-66-68-68

273- Kim Sei-young (KOR) 67-70-68-68

275- Lexi Thompson (USA) 68-70-70-67; Chun In-gee (KOR) 70-70-67-68; Danielle Kang (USA) 68-69-70-68

276- Moriya Jutanugarn (THA) 69-69-67-71

277- Lydia Ko (NZW) 70-71-68-68; Lee Mi-rim (KOR) 71-66-72-68; Austin Ernst (USA) 71-68-69-69; Jodi Ewart Shadoff (ENG) 69-69-68-71; Ariya Jutanugarn 66-68-72-71

MOTOR SPORTS

NASCAR Daytona 500

Results on Sunday At Daytona International Speedway, Daytona Beach, Florida (Lap length: 2.5 miles):

1. (8) Kurt Busch, Ford, 200.

2. (36) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 200.

3. (38) AJ Allmendinger, Chevrolet, 200.

4. (13) Aric Almirola, Ford, 200.

5. (33) Paul Menard, Chevrolet, 200.

6. (15) Joey Logano, Ford, 200.

7. (26) Kasey Kahne, Chevrolet, 200.

8. (30) Michael Waltrip, Toyota, 200.

9. (25) Matt DiBenedetto, Ford, 200.

10. (11) Trevor Bayne, Ford, 200.

11. (39) Brendan Gaughan, Chevrolet, 200.

12. (16) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 200.

13. (35) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 200.

14. (1) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 200.

15. (22) Michael McDowell, Chevrolet, 200

SOCCER

Dutch league

Results on Sunday:

Go Ahead Eagles 1 Vitesse Arnhem 3

AZ Alkmaar 1 FC Zwolle 0

Feyenoord 2 PSV Eindhoven 1

Ajax 4 Heracles 1

English Premier League

Result on Sunday:

Tottenham 4 (Kane 14, 32, 37, Alli 45) Stoke 0

Spanish La Liga

Results on Saturday:

Espanol 3 (Caicedo 17, Jurado 46, Moreno 90+1) Osasuna 0

Athletic Madrid 1 (Godin 70) Barcelona 2 (Rafinha 33, Messi 86)

Athletic Bilbao 3 (Susetae 11, Lekue 33, San Jose 69) Granada 1 (Carcela-Gonzalez 14)

Sporting Gijon 1 (Moi Gomez 49-pen) Celta Vigo 1 (Aspas 75)

Villarreal 2 (Trigueros 50, Bakamora 56) Real Madrid 3 (Balle 64, Ronaldo 74-pen, Morata 83)

French Ligue 1

Results on Sunday:

Lyon 5 (Depay 43, 53, Balliu Camperly 74-gol, Lacaze 78, Baluena 90+2) Metz 0

Saint-Etienne 0 Caen 1 (Rodolin 33)

Marseille 1 (Fanni 70) Paris Saint Germain 5 (Marquinhos 6, Cavani 16, Lucas 50, Drazler 61, Matuidi 72)

German Bundesliga

Results on Sunday:

FC Ingolstadt 0 Borussia Moenchengladbach 2 (Stindl 61, Hahn 90+1)

Schalke 04 1 (Burgstaller 5) Hoffenheim 1 (Rudy 80)

Italian Serie A

Results on Sunday:

Palermo 1 (Nestorovski 31-pen) Sampdoria 1 (Quagliarella 90)

Chievo 2 (Brsic 12, Castro 61) Pescara 0

Crotone 1 (Stoian 10) Cagliari 2 (Pedro 32, Borriello 69)

Genoa 1 (Ntcham 90+4) Bologna 1 (Viviani 57)

Lazio 1 (Immobile 26-pen) Udinese 0

Sassuolo 0 AC Milan 1 (Bacca 22-pen)

Inter Milan 1 (Icardi 81) Roma 3 (Narsingolan 12, 56, Perotti 85-pen)

ATP Delray Beach Open

Result on Sunday (x denotes seed):

Final: Jack Sock (USA x3) bt Milos Raonic (CAN x1) walkover.

ATP Marseille Open

Result on Sunday:

Final: Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (FRA x2) bt Lucas Pouille (FRA) x4 6-4, 6-4.

WTA Budapest Open

Result on Sunday:

Final: Timea Babos (HUN x1) bt Lucie Safarova (CZE x2) 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-3.

ATP Rio Open

Result on Sunday:

Final: Dominic Thiem (AUT x2) bt Pablo Carreno (ESP x4) 7-5, 6-4.