

European Football Celebrates Continental Excellence at Historic KAFD Globe Soccer Europe Awards in Sardinia

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, May 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Under a beautiful night sky and in front of some of European football's brightest stars, PSG striker Kylian Mbappe, Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso, and FC Barcelona phenom Lamine Yamal were among the major winners at the inaugural KAFD Globe Soccer Awards Europe in Costa Smeralda, Sardinia, on May 28.

A glittering ceremony in the luxurious grounds of Hotel Cala di Volpe marked the first European edition of the Globe Soccer Awards, which have been held for the past 14 years in Dubai to recognise the best talents worldwide. With shortlists for five of the 10-plus awards decided by a fan vote earlier this month, a star-studded jury of football industry luminaries selected the final winners crowned on Tuesday evening.

The goal of the KAFD Globe Soccer Awards Europe is to recognise European football excellence both on and off the field. Alongside Mbappe and Alonso, a full catalogue of football industry figures from past and present were in attendance, including FC Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski,



French striker Kylian Mbappe won the Best Player award, presented by Barcelona forward Robert Lewandowski



Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso was named Best Coach at the KAFD Globe Soccer Awards Europe Edition

three-time Champions League winner Fernando Morientes, former England manager Fabio Capello, current Italy coach Luciano Spalletti, and presidents, chairmen, and CEOs of some of the continent's most prominent clubs and organisations.

Mbappe, the French striker whose contract with his Parisian club expires at the end of June, took to the stage amid applause from his peers to collect the KAFD Best Player award. Mbappe said: "It's an honour to be here – I see some great players, managers, legends. It's always great to see everybody recognise your game. I want to thank my club; I know my president is here. It's always a pleasure to be a part of this event. It is part of my journey. I want to work hard to keep my name in the history of football. There is a lot still to do and I am far away from what I want to achieve, but I will start this summer with the Euro and then the next step of my life. I can't wait."

The superstar's moment came minutes after Alonso, who led his Leverkusen side to an undefeated domestic double and the final of the Europa League, received Best Coach from Pedro Proença, President of Liga Portugal. Addressing an audience of more than 400 guests, Alonso said: "It has been a real pleasure to see old colleagues and friends here tonight in this beautiful setting. I'm proud to receive this award, not just for myself but for all Bayer Leverkusen. What we have lived this year has been phenomenal, a fantastic journey. It felt special since the beginning, all the connections we created with the fans, the players, the staff. We've been able to have a dream season."



Mikel Arteta received Best Coach Premier League from former Arsenal player Cesc Fàbregas



Nasser Al-Khelaifi, Chairman of the European Clubs Association and President of PSG, collected the Football Leadership Award

The Emerging Player award was won by FC Barcelona's 16-year-old winger Yamal, who scored five goals and notched eight assists in 37 LALIGA appearances this season, while Xavier Puig, the Barcelona director responsible for women's football, collected the Best Women's Club award on behalf of FC Barcelona Femeni. Manchester City CEO Ferran Soriano likewise received Best Men's Club on behalf of the Premier League winners. All five winners – Mbappe, Alonso, Yamal, FC Barcelona, and Manchester City – also received a gold "Road To Dubai" medal from His Excellency Saeed Hareb, Secretary General of Dubai Sports Council, confirming their qualification for the year-ending Dubai Globe Soccer Awards this winter in the UAE.

Other Globe Soccer winners included Atalanta, who received the Revelation Award after winning the Europa League and qualifying for next season's UEFA Champions League; Nasser Al-Khelaifi, Chairman of the European Clubs Association and President of PSG, who collected the Football Leadership Award; Cesc Fàbregas accepted the Comeback Award on behalf of Como after his Lombardy side was promoted to Serie A for the first time in 21 years, and Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta received Best Coach Premier League from former Gunner Fàbregas after leading his swashbuckling side to within just two points of the English title.

A host of career awards were also distributed during the evening, with Spalletti and Gianluigi Buffon both collecting a Coach and Player Award, respectively, while Karl-Heinz Rummenigge collected a Special Career Award recognising his work with Bayern Munich as CEO and now as a member of the club's supervisory board. A posthumous Special Career Award was also given to the late Italian striker Gigi Riva, who died earlier this year at the age of 79. It was collected by his son Nicola.

"It has been a long journey to reach this point, but I am extremely proud to see the European football industry come out to recognise and celebrate the continent's top-performing protagonists," said Tommaso Bendoni, Founder and CEO of Globe Soccer. "When we created the Dubai Globe Soccer Awards 14 years ago, we had an ambitious vision that is now coming to fruition. It is testament to the growing reputation of the Globe Soccer brand that we have attracted so many of European football's biggest names to join us for this historic event in Costa Smeralda."

Shortly before the start of the first KAFD Globe Soccer Awards Europe, the first, in-person, end-of-season LALIGA Awards took place, with Spanish football celebrating a thrilling 2023-24 season. Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham won Best Player after an incredible debut season in which the Englishman netted 19 goals and laid on six assists in only 28 games. Yamal won Best U23 Player and Jesús Areso of Osasuna won Best Goal for his strike from close to the corner flag against Getafe. Best Coach was won by Michel after he oversaw Girona's climb from 10th to third in just 12 months.

Javier Tebas, President of LALIGA, said: "The staging of this ceremony has been a milestone for European football, but also for LALIGA, as the partnership with Globe Soccer has allowed us to offer a luxurious setting for the LALIGA Awards. It's very important for LALIGA to recognise the

effort and excellence that these awards represent, not forgetting that two of the principles of our New Era are, namely 'Aim High' and 'Believe in Talent', two values that our players, coaches and clubs perfectly represent".

As part of the evening's activities, the three tenors of Il Volo twice performed during the ceremony, including a stunning rendition of the classic Nessun Dorma. Attention now turns to the Globe Soccer Forum, which takes place today and is hosted by Italy's Lega Serie A in partnership with Smeralda Holding, owner of Hotel Cala di Volpe. Speakers throughout the day include, among others, Al-Khelaifi, Soriano, and Arteta, as well as Gabriele Gravina, President of the Italian Football Federation, Quico Catalán, Vice President of LALIGA, and Luigi De Siervo, CEO of Serie A.

The inaugural European edition of the Globe Soccer Awards was sponsored by the King Abdullah Financial District (KAFD), a major financial hub in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and produced by Filmmaster (filmmaster.com). Itaipreziosi and Serie A were Platinum sponsors, alongside Gold sponsors Silversands, Azimut Yachts, Socios.com, EMC Sports News, and Azura. Capichera, Smeraldina, and Belvedere Vodka were official technical partners.

The KAFD Globe Soccer European Awards 2024 and LALIGA Awards were broadcast live worldwide.

A press kit including images, videos, and art, visit: <https://bit.ly/EGSA24PostEventKit>

—ENDS—

KAFD Globe Soccer Awards Europe Edition 2024 Winners:

Best Player: Kylian Mbappe (PSG and France)

Best Coach: Xabi Alonso (Bayer Leverkusen)

Emerging Player: Lamine Yamal (FC Barcelona and Spain)

Best Men's Club: Manchester City

Best Women's Club: FC Barcelona

Best Coach Premier League: Mikel Arteta (Arsenal)

Revelation Award: Atalanta

Football Leadership Award: Nasser Al-Khelaifi (PSG and European Clubs Association)

Comeback Award: Cesc Fàbregas (Como)

Special Career Award: Karl-Heinz Rummenigge

Special Career Award: Gigi Riva

Coach Career Award: Luciano Spalletti

Player Career Award: Gianluigi Buffon

Sportmanship Award: Gianluca Pessotto

Official LALIGA Awards 2024

LALIGA EA SPORTS Champion: Real Madrid

Best U23 Player: Lamine Yamal (FC Barcelona)

Best Coach: Míchel (Girona)

Best Goal: Jesús Areso (Osasuna)

Best Player: Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid)

Team of the Season: Unai Simón, Daniel Carvajal, Ronald Araujo, Antonio Rüdiger, Miguel Gutiérrez; Aleix García, İlkay Gündoğan, Federico Valverde, Isco, Jude Bellingham, Sávio, Griezmann, Robert Lewandowski, Artem Dovbyk, and Vini Jr.

About Globe Soccer

Founded by Tommaso Bendoni and co-owned by Riccardo Silva, Globe Soccer is a Dubai-based football organisation that since 2010 has coordinated one of the most eagerly awaited and coveted awards ceremonies on the footballing calendar: The Dubai Globe Soccer Awards. Attracting high-profile attendees each year, the international event is unique in that it recognises and rewards all stakeholders in the game, from players to chairmen, fans to agents, directors to referees. Global reach has grown year-on-year, with the 2022 event proving no exception, surpassing all previous records with the number of awards increasing to 21, fan votes exceeding 47 million, and social media followers passing 6.5 million.

About Smeralda Holding

Smeralda Holding S.r.l. is an Italian company whose sole shareholder is Qatar Holding Smeralda Investment S.r.l., an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of Qatar Investment Authority ("QIA"). QIA is one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds which in 2012 acquired ownership of the real estate assets consisting of four hotels (Cala Di Volpe, Romazzino, Pitrizza and Cervo), the Marina in Porto Cervo (one of the most important ports in the Mediterranean), a shipyard, the Pevero Golf Club, plus other ancillary assets such as shops, offices, apartments, bars, restaurants, and 2,300 hectares of land in Costa Smeralda.

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