

Barcelona faces a litmus test in Spanish soccer

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Havana, January 2 (RHC)-- A real test of resilience will face Barcelona today against Mallorca in the Spanish soccer league, with the absence of 18 players for different reasons, among them the COVID-19.

Urged to start the journey to 2022 in a positive way, the Culé team will play away at the Estadi de Son Moix and the presence of nine players from the reserve team keeps the alarms of a club that is going through low hours on fire.

Positive cases of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, suspensions and physical problems forced coach Xavi Hernández to pick up the phone and make use of the youth squad, while keeping alive the desire to take the three points in the match.

Despite the adverse context, the former midfielder, 2010 World Cup champion in South Africa, said at a press conference that none of this will be an excuse and his team will try to come out victorious in the first match of the year.

Although some media reports indicate that they have already tested negative in the latest tests, the squad is suffering from the infections of Clement Lenglet, Dani Alves, Ousmane Dembélé, Sergiño Dest, Philippe Coutinho, Abde, Gavi, Jordi Alba, Alejandro Baldé and Samuel Umtiti.

The Catalan squad also has Pedri, Ansu Fati, Memphis Depay, Ferran Torres, Sergi Roberto, Martin Braithwaite and Moussa Wague out injured (or recovering).

In fact, Hernandez has only 11 first-team players available, including two goalkeepers, and only the defensive line has several members of the main squad: Gerard Pique, Ronald Araujo, Eric Garcia and Oscar Mingueza.

Barcelona is currently in seventh place in the standings with 28 points, while Mallorca (20) is resting in fifteenth place, close to the relegation zone.

Real Madrid (46) leads the league without too many complications, ahead of Sevilla (38), Real Betis (33), Rayo Vallecano (20), Atlético de Madrid (29) and Real Sociedad (29), in that order.

Los Merengues will face Getafe this Sunday and Atletico versus Rayo Vallecano in matches between clubs from the Spanish capital, while Elche-Granada, Betis-Celta de Vigo and Real Sociedad-Alaves will also face each other.

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