

by Josue Avila

On August 8th, 2021, the most heartbreaking news any Barcelona fan has received was publicized: Lionel Messi was officially leaving the club he grew up with, the very club who helped him accomplish his dreams of becoming a professional soccer player.

After 21 years, Lionel Messi was leaving the club he *loved*. As stated by long time Barcelona fan Gonzalo Hernandez, "When I got the notification on my phone that Messi was leaving Barcelona, I could not believe it. I thought it had to be some kind of joke."

Messi made his professional debut with Barcelona on November 16, 2003, at the age of 16 in a friendly match against FC



Porto. Messi played his last game with Barcelona nearly 18 years later on May 16, 2021, against Celta de Vigo, as always, Messi scored at the 28th minute but it still was not enough for Barcelona to win the match as they fell 2-1.

Messi was considered a free agent as of July 1st, 2021. His contract was worth \$673 million, which meant that each season Messi would stand to earn approximately \$41 million dollars.

In the summer of 2020, it had been leaked that Messi asked directors of Barcelona to allow him to leave the club for free. Executives of Barcelona did everything they could to make sure that Messi did not leave the club that summer.

On September 4, 2020, it was announced the Lionel Messi would indeed be staying with Barcelona. "In the season of 2020 Barcelona had a capability of spending \$600 million for that season alone, but for the 2021 season that number decreased drastically to \$140 million," reported Sky Sports. When this was announced Barcelona was aware of the fact that they would have to sell many of their players, and if they wished to sign new players, it would have to be on a free transfer.

In turn, Messi and Barcelona had agreed on a five-year contract where Messi was willing to reduce his salary by 50-percent for Barcelona to be able to meet the \$140-million limit to their spending. Even then, Barcelona could not meet the terms to renew

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#### Retro Videogames Continued.

It is noticeable that something is going on, and to add up more suspicious moves that indicate a manipulation in the price of these videogames we can look at the founder of WATA Games, Deniz Kahn. Deniz Kahn is the founder and the person that is the most in the spotlight when we talk about videogames with insane prices. Deniz Kahn has appeared in countless articles in which he states how the value of a game is going to increase and will keep increasing.



In an article by Kutaku titled: "Sealed Copy of Super Mario Bros. Sells for A Record Breaking \$140,608" Kahn States, "I've always said, video games are going to go the way of comics, or cars, or coins; it's only a matter of time until a video game sells for a million dollars." This statement introduces a problem, and that is the president of a grading company speculating on the price of something that benefits them which seems very unethical.

Deniz Khan has also guest-starred on the popular television show *Pawn Stars* a number of times, in which every time he will increase the price of the games that he was giving, even going to say that the *Super Mario Bros.* copy that was sold in 2019 at \$100,000 dollars was worth up to three times more.

On top of that he has stated this for a good number of retro videogames, always giving them ridiculous prices. We can clearly see how this grading company is manipulating the market up to some extent, since now those that have no clue about the videogame market want to have these games. Not because they want to collect them, but because they want to make profit from everything that is going on; and with each statement that Kahn makes the market gets shaken little by little.

While interviewing Mr. Sullivan some questions came to mind. Questions like: When we talk about economics and speculation, should we look at it from a legal point of view, or a moral point of view? This is a question we all should think about when we are out in the world. Are we

going to get what we want no matter the means? Or are we going to follow what we believe is the right thing to do and improve together? Mr. Sullivan follows up with the statement: "But again, you are talking about money and the thirst for money (by any means necessary) is a poison many are willing to consume. Socialists claim financial crimes are an example of capitalistic greed, depriving the Common Man of his/her hard-earned wages. The problem: socialists are just as greedy and money hungry as any capitalist."



Everyone has a different view when it comes to ethicality. But one thing is for sure, we cannot let companies manipulate prices of items that are in their interest in any form.

# Opinion

## SPORTS CAN BE LIFE CHANGING

by Joseph Alvarez

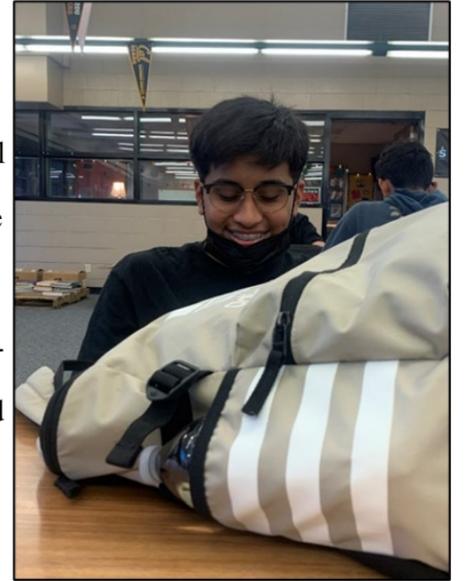
Sports set high motivation standards that are both impacting to athletes and to those that simply appreciate and observe the sport as fans.

Ever wonder how people's lives would be if sports did not exist? Sports are something that many take for granted as we expect them to be there for us when we need them.

Sports build character. They help to fine tune both physical and mental aspects within those that play and watch them.

Alan Ramirez (10) stated his opinion on how sports helped him and made a profound impact on his life.

"Soccer has been a sport that has been with me for a while now and it keeps me in this positive mood that helps me to get through tough times that I deal with," commented Ramirez. Tough times that people go through can lead them to situations where they might not know what to do. My friend Ramirez on the other hand, relied on soccer to console him.



In addition to building characters, sports help



construct morals and values in our everyday lives.

What impact did these sports have on your life?

David Gomez (10) pondered Where would [he] actually be if [he] didn't start participating in a sport?

"If I never signed up

for a sport, I would have definitely become a lazy person and a person who didn't have anything that he can put his heart into, so I'm definitely grateful for these opportunities that sports have provided for me," exclaimed Gomez.

Keeping young minds active around the world had been one of the greatest impacts attributed to athletics. Jamies Winston, who was the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 2015 number one overall pick in the NFL draft, has long been an advocate for the positivity that sports bring in one's life.

Now the starting quarterback for the New Orleans Saints, Winston was a sports-loving boy from early childhood and got inspiration on the track from his father who was also associated with the sports. Winston later admitted that his sport gave him people to look up too and give him that push that he needed to start his career.

A close family member of mine, twelve-year-old Mia Ramos, has been playing soccer for a couple of years. Soccer was a big impact on her life as it set future standards for her and keeps her striving towards her goals. "When I come home from a long day of school, half of the time I feel very stressed and just want to get out the house and do something. I later found my love for the sport soccer since it lets me interact with friends and show of some skills," confided Ramos.

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