# Luis Figo sparks controversy with obscene gesture at Barcelona fan in Lisbon



Luis Figo, the former football superstar, found himself at the centre of controversy once more after directing an uncouth gesture towards a Barcelona supporter in Lisbon. Figo, now 52, was attending the official dinner ahead of the Women's Champions League final, which drew various dignitaries to the event. As he arrived, he was met with a hostile reception from a lone onlooker sporting a bright yellow Barcelona jersey. The confrontation, escalated by the heckler's taunts of "traitor," prompted Figo to respond with an obscene gesture before attempting to engage further, only to ultimately walk away, perhaps aware that his actions were being captured on camera.

This incident echoes the protracted fallout from Figo's controversial transfer in 2000, when he made the audacious move from Barcelona to Real Madrid for what was then a world-record fee of £52 million. At the time, such a switch was unprecedented and deeply polarising, inciting fury from Barcelona supporters who felt he had betrayed their faith in him. Notably, Figo had previously expressed unwavering commitment to Barcelona, only to shock fans and pundits alike when he chose to join their fiercest rivals.

The ramifications of that decision have endured over the years. Supporters’ animosity was palpable during Figo's returns to Camp Nou where he faced relentless jeering and even hostile assaults. Notably, during one notorious match, he was showered with an array of objects, including coins and even a pig's head, as thousands chanted "traitor" in unison. Describing the experience in a later interview, Figo reflected on the mental strain of such confrontations, stating, "These days, there's more protection. It felt like I was doing a press conference every day. That takes its toll."

Barcelona's long-standing hurt from Figo's departure was underscored when the club prevented him from participating in their Legends XI match against Juventus, reflecting the deep-seated animosity even years later. The former Barcelona president, Joan Gaspart, has maintained a sharp criticism of Figo, labelling him a "traitor" and alleging that he exploited Barcelona’s circumstances to negotiate a more lucrative deal with Madrid.

In a candid interview, Figo mused on the motivations behind his decision, stating, "The main reason I left was because they valued me and genuinely wanted me... it could have been a cock-up, but it wasn't." This sentiment, however, did little to quell the backlash, as many in the football community questioned not just his loyalty, but also the ethical ramifications of such a significant transfer.

Figo's legacy remains a complex blend of admiration for his talents and a sense of betrayal among a faction of football fans. His gesture in Lisbon serves as a reminder that even after two decades, the past continues to influence the present, illustrating the deep emotional ties that football can evoke. As Figo navigates his connections with the sport post-retirement, the spectre of his past choices looms large, highlighting the sometimes bitter relationship between professional athletes and their supporters.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-14745985/Luis-Figo-X-rated-gesture-Barcelona-Real-Madrid.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-14745985/Luis-Figo-X-rated-gesture-Barcelona-Real-Madrid.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.sport.es/en/news/barca/it-was-16-years-ago-5287086), [[5]](https://www.sports-king.com/luis-figo-real-madrid-transfer-3397/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.sportskeeda.com/football/news/former-barcelona-president-slams-real-madrid-s-transfer-fiasco-figo-traitor-played-me), [[4]](https://www.irishtimes.com/sport/soccer/barcelona-prevent-luis-figo-from-representing-their-legends-xi-1.2238831), [[6]](https://www.sportskeeda.com/football/how-barcelona-fans-react-luis-figo-real-madrid-transfer-2000)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://www.caughtoffside.com/2016/05/31/luis-figo-barcelona-betrayer-remembers-real-madrid-transfer/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-14745985/Luis-Figo-X-rated-gesture-Barcelona-Real-Madrid.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.sport.es/en/news/barca/it-was-16-years-ago-5287086> - This article commemorates the 16th anniversary of Luis Figo's controversial transfer from FC Barcelona to Real Madrid in 2000. It details the events leading up to the move, including Figo's previous statements about his commitment to Barcelona, and the subsequent backlash from Barcelona fans, who felt betrayed by his decision to join their arch-rivals.
3. <https://www.sportskeeda.com/football/news/former-barcelona-president-slams-real-madrid-s-transfer-fiasco-figo-traitor-played-me> - Former Barcelona president Joan Gaspart criticizes Luis Figo's transfer to Real Madrid, labeling him a 'traitor' and accusing him of exploiting the situation to secure a move. Gaspart recounts a late-night phone call where Figo demanded a financial guarantee from Barcelona, only to join Real Madrid shortly after.
4. <https://www.irishtimes.com/sport/soccer/barcelona-prevent-luis-figo-from-representing-their-legends-xi-1.2238831> - FC Barcelona prevented Luis Figo from representing their Legends XI in a match against Juventus, highlighting the lasting animosity between the club and the player following his 2000 transfer to Real Madrid. The club's request to UEFA underscores the depth of the rift caused by Figo's departure.
5. <https://www.sports-king.com/luis-figo-real-madrid-transfer-3397/> - This article discusses the shock and outrage following Luis Figo's 2000 transfer from FC Barcelona to Real Madrid. It details the events of his first return to Camp Nou, where he was met with chants of 'traitor' and objects thrown at him, including a pig's head, illustrating the intense backlash from Barcelona fans.
6. <https://www.sportskeeda.com/football/how-barcelona-fans-react-luis-figo-real-madrid-transfer-2000> - The piece explores the intense reaction of Barcelona fans to Luis Figo's 2000 transfer to Real Madrid. It describes the hostile atmosphere during his first return to Camp Nou, where he was subjected to chants of 'traitor' and had objects thrown at him, including a pig's head, reflecting the depth of the betrayal felt by fans.
7. <https://www.caughtoffside.com/2016/05/31/luis-figo-barcelona-betrayer-remembers-real-madrid-transfer/> - Luis Figo reflects on his controversial transfer from FC Barcelona to Real Madrid in 2000. He discusses his decision-making process, the role of his agent, and the subsequent backlash from Barcelona fans, who labeled him a 'traitor' and subjected him to hostile receptions during his returns to Camp Nou.