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## Ronaldo in Riyadh: the ‘deus’ of football to cheer on the Deus of padel From CR7 to Verstappen and Shakira: superstars with a passion for ‘pala’

*“I play every day”*. Literally. If in 2024 it was **Neymar** who couldn't resist the call of the **Premier Padel** show, this year it's global superstar **Cristiano Ronaldo** who confesses to have passion for padel. A passion that translates into a fixed daily fixture on the padel court, whether it be that of his home, a luxurious resort or an exclusive club, it doesn't matter: what counts is playing. And, if possible, also to watch the matches of the great padel champions. As happened last Sunday in **Riyadh**: a ‘deus’ of football cheering on the **Deus** of padel. In the stands of the Padel Rush Arena, which hosts the **Riyadh Season P1**, the opening event of the **Qatar Airways Premier Padel** season, appeared the global superstar encapsulated in an acronym, CR7, one of the greatest footballers ever.

Portuguese like his brothers **Nuno** and **Miguel Deus**, who by winning the decisive qualifying round entered the main draw of the Arab P1, **Cristiano Ronaldo** took his seat in a luxurious sky box without missing a point from his two compatriots. CR7's passion for “pala” is well known and summed up in a phrase as direct as one of his shots on goal: *“I play every day”*, Ronaldo recently confessed. He plays whenever possible in Arabia, in the moments free from his commitments with **Al-Nassr**, but he also plays in Portugal, as demonstrated by his recent purchase of the Lisboa Racket Centre and his intention to invest in the Cidade do Padel in Oeiras, a 17-court centre soon to be built and which will also house the headquarters of the Portuguese padel federation. Ronaldo, by the way, certainly didn't miss the chance to play with FIP number 1 **Arturo Coello**: all available on the Portuguese player's YouTube channel, which has recorded over 2 million views.

If the passion of footballers (or former footballers) for padel is well known and has a large number of players, padel fever does not spare other sports stars either. From **Charles Leclerc**, **Lando Norris** and **Max Verstappen**, photographed during a padel match in **Doha** just a few days before the Formula 1 Grand Prix, to **Jimmy Butler**, an NBA basketball star wearing the Golden State Warriors jersey. Another big NBA star, **Tony Parker**, has become a padel promoter, while **Daddy Yankee**, singer and businessman is the owner of a US padel team. Both of them, of course, cannot resist the appeal of a padel match in the same way as **Andy Murray**, former world number one tennis player, **Tiger Woods** and **Justin Timberlake**. The latter two are

partners in a massive real estate deal in Miami involving the construction of ten padel courts in a luxurious complex with a large golf course inside. The passion for padel takes on Hollywood dimensions for those who cannot resist the attraction of the 'pala' like **Shakira** or **Enrique Iglesias**, **Antonio Banderas** and **Eva Longoria**. And that's not all.

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