



## READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and choose the correct answer for the questions below.

### WHERE WOULD FC BARCELONA BE IN AN INDEPENDENT CATALONIA?

FC Barcelona has been anything but a neutral bystander on the question of Catalan independence in recent years. It has firmly nailed its colours to the mast of the movement planning a referendum on the issue on 1<sup>st</sup> October, a referendum declared illegal by the central government in Madrid. But its position has raised more pressing questions, as the situation has become more heated, with militarised Civil Guard police dispatched to arrest pro-secessionist officials and seize referendum materials.

Wouldn't an independent Catalonia deprive Spain's La Liga of one of its most prestigious clubs? And what about the fans of the world famous *el clásico* matches between Barça and arch-rival Real Madrid, a series in which the latter is just ahead on 95 victories to 91?

### Does Catalonia want to leave Spain?

Those in charge at FC Barcelona insist they are not politicians; the club neither has a position on voting Yes for independence, nor in which league it would compete in the hypothetical situation of Catalonia seceding from Spain. But in 2014, FC Barcelona joined the National Pact on the Right to Decide, a platform comprising political parties and civil society organisations in favour of a referendum on independence for Catalonia.

On Wednesday, as the Civil Guard were arresting Catalan government officials, the club released perhaps its most blatantly political statement ever, saying it was defending democracy, freedom of speech and self-determination.

Whatever happens over the next few weeks and months, FC Barcelona seems to believe that it will always be able to choose which league it plays in. Even if Catalans opted to leave Spain, Barça believes that Spain will never want to stop watching *el clásico*.

### Guardiola stars at Catalan protest rally

"We will stay in the same league as Espanyol," said FC Barcelona's vice-president, Carles Villarubí, earlier this month in reference to the Catalan capital's second club, whose fans are considered to be pro-Spanish.

However, Javier Tebas, the president of Spain's Professional Football League, which organises La Liga, struck back: "Barcelona cannot choose where it plays if there is an independence process in Catalonia."

A well-placed source inside the club has told the BBC that there will be no official statements on what remains purely a hypothetical scenario. But the source added: "If the situation of Catalan independence arose, the club would have to take into account the opinion of its members before making such an important decision. Secondly, and with all due respect, we believe we are one of the leading brands in world football and any league would be eager to have us, including Spain's."

Gabriel Rufián, a member of Spain's Congress for the Catalan Republican Left party, said that Barça's continued presence in the Spanish league would be no more incongruous than Monaco playing in the French league.

Few people seem willing to contemplate a Catalan national league dominated by one of the world's biggest clubs. "I cannot imagine the Spanish Liga without Barcelona," said Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane. "I just can't see it as a fan of football and of sport in general."

## **Questions**

### **1. Football Club Barcelona...**

- a. has stayed at the edge of the question of Catalonia independence
- b. agrees with the referendum on Catalan independence on 1<sup>st</sup> October
- c. has kept a neutral position on the question of Catalan independence
- d. A and B are correct.

### **2. As regards el clásico,...**

- a. FC Barcelona has won 95 times.
- b. Real Madrid has won 91 times.
- c. Real Madrid has won 95 times.
- d. FC Barcelona has won more times than Real Madrid.

### **3. According to the text, FC Barcelona seems to believe that...**

- a. they will play in whatever league they want to.
- b. they will not be able to choose which league they will play in.
- c. they will not be allowed to play in the Spanish league.
- d. they will be expelled from La Liga.

### **4. If Catalonia leaves Spain, FC Barcelona thinks that...**

- a. Spain won't want them in La Liga, as Catalonia will be an independent country.
- b. Spanyol will play in La Liga, but not them.
- c. Spain will want them in La Liga to be able to watch *el clásico*.
- d. they will have to play just in their national league.