



Chus Mateo is voted by his peers as the EuroLeague Coach of the Year

Real Madrid's head coach took his team back to the Final Four with the league's best record

After guiding Real Madrid to a dominant regular season and a 3-0 playoff sweep, Chus Mateo has been chosen as the 2023-24 Alexander Gomelskiy Coach of the Year. Mateo's name appeared on the most ballots from his fellow Turkish Airlines EuroLeague head coaches, who are the sole voters for this award.

While 17 EuroLeague clubs began the season with the dream of winning the championship, only Mateo's Real Madrid was challenged with the task of defending it. And despite the potential pitfalls that come while wearing the crown, Mateo made sure Los Blancos thrived. Real Madrid sat atop the standings all season long, winning its first 10 games and proceeding to finish in first place with a 27-7 record. The team then became the only team to sweep its opponent in the playoffs. Now, Mateo and Real Madrid head to Berlin to defend the championship.

The Gomelskiy Trophy is named after the late Hall of Fame coach, who was a four-time EuroLeague champion, six-time EuroBasket winner, Olympic gold medalist and twice a Basketball World Cup winner. Mateo is the third Spanish coach to win the award and the second from Real Madrid. Pablo Laso was the Coach of the Year with Real Madrid in both 2014-15 and 2017-18 while Xavi Pascual won the 2009-10 award with FC Barcelona.

Mateo, 55, finished ahead of Ergin Ataman of Panathinaikos AKTOR Athens, who was this season's runner-up, and Maccabi Playtika Tel Aviv's Oded Kattash, who received the third-most votes this season. Other coaches receiving votes included Sasa Obradovic of AS Monaco, Sarunas Jasikevicius of Fenerbahce Beko Istanbul, Georgio Bartzokas of Olympiacos Piraeus, Dusko

Ivanovic of Baskonia Vitoria-Gasteiz, Tomislav Mijatovic of Anadolu Efes Istanbul, Luca Banchi of Virtus Segafredo Bologna, Roger Grimau of FC Barcelona and Ettore Messina of EA7 Emporio Armani Milan.

Mateo had several things working in his favor when the season started; even though Real parted ways with four contributors from last season's championship team, he only had one player to work into the system. That was Facundo Campazzo, who had already played under Mateo when the latter was Laso's assistant coach on Real Madrid's championship teams of 2015 and 2018. With the roster in place, Mateo and co. went about asserting their will on the league.

Los Blancos led the league in scoring (89.0 ppg.), rebounding (36.8 rpg.), assists (20.8 apg.), blocks (3.6 bpg.) and PIR (108.3). In the team's season-opening winning streak, seven of the 10 games were won by double figures. Sixteen of its 27 regular-season wins and two of its three playoff victories were by margins of at least 10 points. There were only four teams with winning records on the road this season; Real Madrid cruised in away games to a 13-4 mark.

Eyes may have been raised when, after coasting to a 22-3 mark, Real Madrid took its foot off the gas and lost three in a row – including two at home – between Rounds 26 and 28. Mateo knew not to panic as Los Blancos then became the first team to clinch a playoff berth this season with a Round 29 win over Virtus Segafredo Bologna. One week and two wins later, Real had a streak going and had clinched the top spot in the standings. Despite a Round 33 home loss to Baskonia, Real Madrid made quick work of its Basque opponents in the playoffs. Mateo's men won the first two games by double figures and scored more than 100 in the last two games of the three-game sweep.

Born in Madrid, Mateo coached his way through Real Madrid's junior teams and then served as an assistant coach on the senior squad to Sergio Scariolo, the late Javier Imbroda and Julio Lamas. He was Laso's assistant from 2014 to 2022, when he replaced Laso after the latter suffered a heart attack midway through the Spanish League finals. He helped Real win the series and lift the Spanish League trophy and was soon after named head coach. He had won six other Spanish championships and five Spanish Cups as Real's assistant coach. Mateo previously served as head coach of Baloncesto Zaragoza, Unicaja Malaga and Baloncesto Fuenlabrada of Spain.

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Press office: mediacommunication@euroleague.net Phone: 34 933 278 427

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