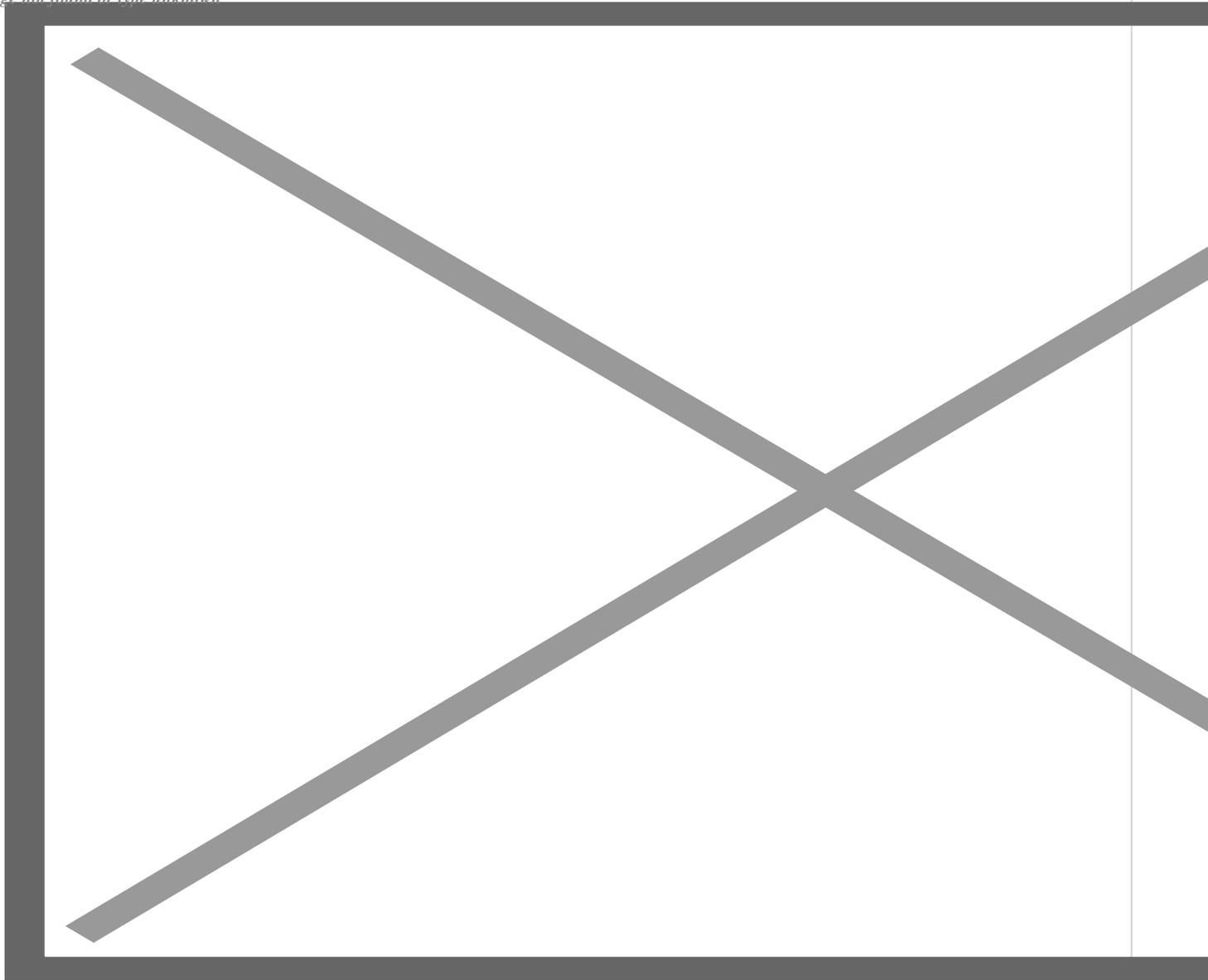


Messi wins L'Équipe award ahead of Mbappé

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Lionel Messi made his debut as PSG's goal scorer and found the net again, at club level, after four months.

Havana, January 9 (RHC) - The prestigious French sports daily L'Equipe awarded Lionel Messi with the "Champion of Champions" trophy, with which it rewards the best sportsman of each year.

The voting is carried out by the newspaper's journalists and La Pulga surpassed fellow soccer player Kilian Mbappé, tennis player Rafael Nadal, cyclist Remco Evenepoel and Formula 1 driver Max Verstappen, among the top five most voted.

Messi was left with 808 points and doubled his PSG teammate Mbappe, who finished with 381 units.

It should be recalled that L'Equipe was highly critical of Messi's performances in his first season at Paris Saint-Germain.

The "Champion of Champions" award has been given since 1946 to Frenchmen and in 1976 it was opened to sportsmen from the rest of the world.

The first Argentine to win it was Diego Armando Maradona in 1986, after his brilliant performance at the World Cup in Mexico.

Messi had already won it in 2011, when with Barcelona he won all the titles: Club World Cup, Champions League, European Super Cup, Spanish League and Spanish Super Cup, besides being the top scorer of the Champions League and winning the Ballon d'Or.

The great figure of the Argentina national team returned last Tuesday to the French capital from Rosario, where he had taken a few days off after the victory with his national team in the World Cup in Qatar.

On Wednesday, he returned to training with PSG and was greeted with applause from his teammates.

There was still no face-to-face with Mbappé, who took a vacation and is in the United States.

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