



Vancouver Whitecaps FC



Inter Miami CF

A historic first: Vancouver Whitecaps and Inter Miami set for inaugural semifinal clash

An unprecedented semifinal awaits in the Concacaf Champions Cup, as Vancouver Whitecaps FC and Inter Miami CF prepare to face off for the very first time in the tournament's history.

These two sides have only met once before, during MLS Matchday 15 of the 2024 regular season. Inter Miami emerged victorious with a 2-1 win at BC Place in Vancouver on May 25, 2024. Robert Taylor (38') and Leonardo Campana (54') scored for the Herons, while Ryan Gauld pulled one back for the hosts with a 72nd-minute penalty.

Inter Miami will become the 14th MLS club to reach the semifinals of the Concacaf Champions Cup. Should they advance to the final, they would be the 7th MLS side to do so. The semifinal opener will mark Miami's 11th match in the competition—ranking them 5th among MLS clubs who have needed the most games to reach this stage, trailing only FC Dallas (15), New York Red Bulls (17), Seattle Sounders (29), and Columbus Crew (29).

For Vancouver Whitecaps, this marks a return to the semifinals eight years after their last appearance. In 2017, the Canadian side fell to Tigres UANL. In the first leg, played on March 14 at the Estadio Universitario in Monterrey, Vancouver lost 2-0, with an own goal from Costa Rican defender Kendall Waston (66') and a strike from Eduardo Vargas (87'). The second leg, held on April 5 at BC Place, saw Vancouver take the lead through Brek Shea (3'), but Tigres came back with goals from André-Pierre Gignac (63') and Damián Álvarez (84') to reach the final.

With this run, the Whitecaps now match Toronto FC for the most semifinal appearances by a Canadian club (two each). The upcoming tie will be the first semifinal in tournament history to feature a Canadian club facing a U.S. club.

**Canada's previous semifinal matchups came against teams from Mexico and Costa Rica:**

- Toronto FC vs. Santos Laguna (2011–12)
- Vancouver Whitecaps vs. Tigres UANL (2016–17)
- Toronto FC vs. Club América (2018)
- CF Montréal vs. LD Alajuelense (2014–15)

In total, Canadian clubs have reached the semifinals on four occasions—advancing to the final twice:

- CF Montréal vs. Alajuelense (2014–15)
- Toronto FC vs. Club América (2018)

**They were eliminated twice:**

- Toronto FC vs. Santos Laguna (2011–12)
- Vancouver Whitecaps vs. Tigres (2016–17)

MLS clubs, collectively, have only won four semifinal series against international opponents:

- D.C. United vs. Club León (1998, single-leg)
- Real Salt Lake vs. Santos Laguna (2010–11)
- LAFC vs. Club América (2020)
- Columbus Crew vs. Monterrey (2024)

Out of 19 total semifinals contested by MLS clubs, four were single-leg matches and fifteen were two-legged series.

### **Post-Match Notes**

#### **Inter Miami (USA) 3–1 Los Angeles FC (USA) | Aggregate: 3–2**

**Lionel Messi (ARG)** reached seven goals in the Champions Cup, becoming the second-oldest player to do so since the 2008–09 season. At 37 years, 9 months, and 16 days, he trails only Honduran legend Carlos Pavón, who scored his seventh at 37 years, 11 months, and 12 days on September 21, 2011, for Real España against Colorado Rapids.

Messi also became the sixth player to both score and provide an assist in the same game during this edition of the tournament. He is the third Argentine to achieve this feat—and the oldest.

Messi has now scored seven goals in eight appearances against goalkeeper Hugo Lloris (FRA): three with FC Barcelona (including a brace), two with Argentina (also including a brace), and two with Inter Miami (again, a brace).

#### **Pumas UNAM (MEX) 2–2 Vancouver Whitecaps (CAN) | Aggregate: 3–3**

**Tristan Blackmon (USA)** scored his second Champions Cup goal and netted the 140th all-time for Canadian clubs in the competition. His header also marked the 25th goal by a Canadian team in the quarterfinal stage.

**Sebastian Berhalter (USA)** scored his first-ever goal in the tournament, becoming the third European-born player to score for Vancouver Whitecaps and the youngest to do so at 23 years, 10 months, and 30 days.

The Whitecaps have now won two of their three quarterfinal series:

- 2016–17 vs. NY Red Bulls

- 2025 vs. Pumas UNAM

They were eliminated once in 2023 by LAFC.

Pumas UNAM, meanwhile, lost a series to a Canadian side for the first time, having previously advanced past Cavalry FC in the 2025 first round.