

Messi scoops individual, team Laureus double

May 9, 2023

Online Desk: Argentina and Paris Saint Germain veteran star Lionel Messi on Monday scooped a unique double, landing individual and team Laureus awards for his exploits and those of his World-Cup winning nation. Messi, 35, finally landed a first World Cup winners medal in Qatar last December after a thrilling penalty shootout final win over France — enough to earn him an individual accolade while the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner also accepted the team award at a prestigious Paris ceremony.

The Argentine, who attended the ceremony with wife Antonela Roccuzzo, previously had won the award jointly with British Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton in 2020. The accolade saw Messi, who earned a fine and suspension from PSG for making an unauthorised promotional visit to Saudi Arabia, see off competition notably from clubmate Kylian Mbappé, whose World Cup final hatrick was not enough to earn him glory in Qatar.

Jamaican sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who last August earned a fifth world 100m crown at Eugene, Oregon, picked up the female athlete award while US Open tennis champion Carlos Alcaraz earned the World Breakthrough of the Year award. Going back to football, Denmark and Manchester United star Christian Eriksen earned a Comeback Award for returning to the top of the European game after collapsing with cardiac arrest during the Euros two years ago.

Swiss para-athlete sensation Catherine Debrunner meanwhile picked up the Disability Award after triumphing in her opening two marathons. The Sport for Good Award was presented to TeamUp — a programme for children displaced by war — by Barcelona and Poland star Robert Lewandowski.

Meanwhile, Chinese-American Olympic ski freestyle champion Eileen Gu won the World Action Sportsperson accolade. The awards have been made annually since 2000 by a jury comprising 71 members of the Laureus World Sports Academy, representing the past 50 years of athletic excellence. This year's ceremony following two virtual editions owing to Covid restrictions.