



May 24, 2018

Press Release

Rakuten, Inc.
Rakuten Vissel Kobe, Inc.

Rakuten Announces Signing of Andrés Iniesta to Vissel Kobe

Tokyo, May 24, 2018 – Rakuten Vissel Kobe, Inc., a Rakuten Group company, today announced that Andrés Iniesta will join Vissel Kobe, the much-loved Western Japan football club, after an historic career at FC Barcelona, one of the most iconic and beloved football clubs in the world.

Since the beginning of his professional career with FC Barcelona in 2002, Iniesta has not only become one of the top players in the world, he is also renowned for his embodiment of the philosophy and values of the iconic club, with his commitment to teamwork and beautiful play. With a social media presence that includes over 74 million followers, Iniesta is also known as a global influencer.

Iniesta developed his football career through the FC Barcelona cantera, the club's unique youth league system that fosters young players, and his addition to Vissel Kobe is not only expected to draw in fans to see his world-class playing style but is expected to inspire the team and contribute to the development of the next generation of players through the introduction of the Iniesta Methodology to the youth academy. As Vissel Kobe works toward its goal of becoming the number one club in Asia, the entry of Iniesta to the team will energize football both in Japan and across Asia.

Through promotions related to Iniesta across multiple channels of the Rakuten Ecosystem, including Rakuten TV, Rakuten will work to build the fan base of Vissel Kobe and the J.League, Japan's professional football league, both in Japan and overseas.

Rakuten, Inc. and Rakuten Vissel Kobe, Inc. will continue to promote the J.League and football in both Japan and Asia, aiming to contribute to the further development of sports and culture.

Media Inquiries

Corporate Communications Department

global-pr@mail.rakuten.com

(+81) 50-5817-1104

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