

《45岁前巴塞罗那主教练比拉诺瓦患癌症去世》

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Former Barcelona coach Tito Vilanova has died at the age of 45, succumbing to his battle with cancer. Vilanova's death prompted an outpouring of condolences from players and coaches across Europe. Barca star Lionel Messi posted a photograph of himself with Vilanova on his Facebook page with the message: "We will always remember you. All my sympathy goes to Tito's family."



Former Barcelona coach Tito Vilanova

Vilanova, who has battled a recurring tumour in a saliva gland, was admitted to a local hospital in Barcelona last week. He reportedly had emergency surgery on Thursday. Vilanova first became ill in November 2011, while still an assistant to Pep Guardiola, and took a leave of absence after undergoing surgery.

The soft-spoken Catalan returned and took over from Guardiola the next season, when he led Barcelona to the Spanish league title with a record-tying 100 points. Vilanova had a second tumour removed in December 2012 and travelled to New York several times during the season to receive further treatment. He finished the season before suddenly being forced to resign following a relapse in July.

As an assistant, Vilanova helped Guardiola propel Barcelona into its most successful period and transform the team into the world's best. Barcelona won 14 of a possible 19 major trophies from 2008-12 under Guardiola before adding the league title with Vilanova in 2013. His funeral will be on Monday at Barcelona's cathedral. Vilanova is survived by his wife, and two children.

"In past years this team has shown that they were capable of winning much more than any team could imagine. Fourteen titles out of nineteen and Tito 's last year league with record 100 points. But they have also proven being capable of overcoming very heavy blows. But at this time only hours since we've learned about Tito's death things look tough. I believe in the human potential of this team," said Albert Font, Spanish sports reporter.

