

**CULTURED DEFENDERS**

**(SWEEPERS / LIBEROS / BALL-PLAYING DEFENDERS)**

#50



**Gustav (Gustl) WITLATSCHIL** (b. 1935)  
*Germany, Half Back/Centre-Half*  
*League runner-up 1956*  
*Cup winner 1955, 1956*  
*Cup finalist 1960*

The technically sound two-footed Witlatschil was originally an inside forward who gradually withdrew to a more defensive position. By the early-1960s he had found his favorite role being that of centre-half, but he was regularly used in many other roles, including that of left back, if need be. A persistent player who was strong at heading and a solid tackler. Due to his offensive upbringing he was adept at switching between defense and offensive rapidly and was a goal threat going forward.

*League record*

1953-54	1	0	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1954-55	0	0	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1955-56	0	0	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1956-57	1	0	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1957-58	16	3	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1958-59	17	8	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	29	1	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	25	5	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	30	4	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	30	7	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	28	4	Karlsruhe (BL)
1964-65	25	3	Karlsruhe (BL)
1965-66	18	2	Karlsruhe (BL)

#49



**Holger HIERONYMUS** (b. 1959)  
3 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder/Libero  
League champion 1982, 1983  
League runner-up 1980, 1981, 1984  
Champions Cup 1983  
Champions Cup finalist 1980  
World Cup finalist 1982

Originally a defensive midfielder, Hieronymus' short peak came as an attacking libero. A player with very good ball control, tall but maybe a bit too slender, not a fighter yet with a good aerial presence who could read a game quite well. Had to retire in 1985 aged 26 after a bad foul by Mannheim's Fritz Walter. With liberos often reaching their peak years around 30 years of age, we will never know what kind of career Hieronymus might have had.

*League record*

1978-79	29	2	Hamburg (BL)
1979-80	17	3	Hamburg (BL)
1980-81	23	0	Hamburg (BL)
1981-82	28	1	Hamburg (BL)
1982-83	32	3	Hamburg (BL)
1983-84	21	0	Hamburg (BL)
1984-85	0	0	Hamburg (BL)

**#48**



**Werner MELZER** (b. 1954)  
Germany, Libero/Midfielder  
Cup finalist 1976, 1981

A technically very sound, lightfooted libero, with a good reading of the game. Probably a tad too small to become a top player in this position

*League record*

1974-75	32	3	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1975-76	34	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1976-77	33	2	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1977-78	32	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1978-79	32	3	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1979-80	33	5	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1980-81	28	5	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1981-82	34	4	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1982-83	31	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1983-84	32	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1984-85	29	2	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1985-86	24	5	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)



**Thomas KEMPE** (b. 1960)  
Germany, Midfielder/Libero  
League champion 1984

Began as central offensive midfielder with a very good touch who was intended to become a playmaker but in the end was inhibited by the demands others had of him and stalled after a promising start when he debuted at age 19 in 1979 for Duisburg. Coupled with his fine technique, he possessed a very good shot and was also an able header of the ball, despite being not a tall player. In the second half of his career Kempe became an accomplished libero while playing for Bochum. Still, a player who didn't fully meet his great potential.

*League record*

1979-80	31	6	Duisburg (BL)
1980-81	26	3	Duisburg (BL)
1981-82	31	4	Duisburg (BL)
1982-83	30	7	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1983-84	13	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1984-85	26	5	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1985-86	31	3	Bochum (BL)
1986-87	32	2	Bochum (BL)
1987-88	29	2	Bochum (BL)
1988-89	25	1	Bochum (BL)
1989-90	30	3	Bochum (BL)
1990-91	27	3	Bochum (BL)
1991-92	28	1	Bochum (BL)
1992-93	32	1	Bochum (BL)



**Günter SEBERT** (b. 1948)  
Germany, Midfielder/Libero

A very fine libero who stuck to the same club for 31 years, engaging in 597 league games, scoring 110 goals. Originally a midfielder, Sebert might have achieved more name recognition had he left Mannheim sometime in the 1970s when he was at his best. As it was, he stayed loyal to Mannheim and is rightly considered one of the greatest legends in Mannheim's history. At the age of 35 he was still arguably the most important player of his team when they finally managed promotion to the top level. It is very likely that Sebert would today be remembered as one of the finest midfielders and liberos of the 1970s had he played top level football at that time. He was a robust player but technically well-versed, excellent at heading and an expert freekick taker.

#### *League record*

1966-67	1	0	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1967-68	17	7	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1968-69	21	6	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1969-70	34	6	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1970-71	-	-	Mannheim (Div. 3)
1971-72	-	-	Mannheim (Div. 3)
1972-73	37	4	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1973-74	34	5	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1974-75	35	8	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1975-76	37	18	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1976-77	30	7	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1977-78	38	5	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1978-79	38	9	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1979-80	37	2	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1980-81	37	5	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1981-82	36	6	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1982-83	37	9	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1983-84	30	3	Mannheim (BL)
1984-85	33	6	Mannheim (BL)
1985-86	33	2	Mannheim (BL)
1986-87	32	2	Mannheim (BL)

## #45



**Hans-Jürgen WITTKAMP** (b. 1947)  
*Germany, Centre Forward/Midfielder/Sweeper*  
*League champion 1975, 1976, 1977*  
*League runner-up 1974, 1978*  
*Cup winner 1973*  
*Cup finalist 1969*  
*UEFA Cup 1975*  
*UEFA Cup finalist 1973*

A 'classic' defensive libero for most of his career, Jürgen Wittkamp began as a central forward in the mid-1960s but soon was retrained as a libero around 1970. Despite his beginnings as a forward, as libero Wittkamp was not known to foray much into the opposing half as he liked to confine himself (or was told so by his manager) to defensive tasks. In his role as a defensively-minded libero, Wittkamp impressed with his good control and his good eye. He was very strong in the air and a focal point of the Borussia Mönchengladbach team of the 1970s.

#### *League record*

1967-68	26	12	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1968-69	29	7	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1969-70	26	6	FC Schalke 04 (BL)

1970-71	20	5	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1971-72	29	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1972-73	11	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1973-74	14	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1974-75	29	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1975-76	34	5	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1976-77	33	5	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1977-78	29	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1978-79	-	-	Erkerschwick (Div. 3)
1979-80	-	-	Erkerschwick (Div. 3)
1980-81	36	2	Erkerschwick (Div. 2)

## #44



**Joachim BÄSE** (b. 1939)  
*1 A, Germany, Half-Back/Libero*  
*League champion 1967*

Started out as a left back with good technique, then a defensive midfielder and by the mid-1960s he had evolved into a libero at Braunschweig, a team he captained to the German championship in 1967. At that time, he was considered by many as the second-best libero in Germany behind Beckenbauer. Similar to Beckenbauer, Bäse wasn't content with playing as a defensive sweeper, he saw his role more like that of a withdrawn playmaker initiating attacks from the centre of defense.

### *League record*

1959-60	14	5	Braunschweig (Div. 1 – North)
1960-61	25	10	Braunschweig (Div. 1 – North)
1961-62	20	6	Braunschweig (Div. 1 – North)
1962-63	28	5	Braunschweig (Div. 1 – North)
1963-64	29	9	Braunschweig (BL)
1964-65	24	1	Braunschweig (BL)
1965-66	20	1	Braunschweig (BL)
1966-67	33	0	Braunschweig (BL)
1967-68	33	0	Braunschweig (BL)
1968-69	17	1	Braunschweig (BL)
1969-70	13	0	Braunschweig (BL)
1970-71	23	0	Braunschweig (BL)
1971-72	33	2	Braunschweig (BL)
1972-73	9	0	Braunschweig (BL)

#43



**Per RØNTVED** (b. 1949)  
*75 A (11 goals), Denmark, Midfielder/Libero*  
*Danish Footballer 1972*

Per Røntved was a very competent libero with great technique who was an organisator from the back with great distribution and who thus became a midfielder as soon as he was in possession. After having been converted from offensive midfielder to defender, the Dane was rated as one of the finest liberos in the Bundesliga during his time in Germany.

*League record*

1966-67	16	6	Brønshøj (Denmark – Div. 2)
1967-68	22	15	Brønshøj (Denmark – Div. 2)
1968-69	20	12	Brønshøj (Denmark – Div. 2)
1969-70	22	8	Brønshøj (Denmark)
1970-71	22	10	Brønshøj (Denmark)
1971-72	16	6	Brønshøj (Denmark)
1972-73	28	5	Bremen (BL)
1973-74	29	7	Bremen (BL)
1974-75	23	7	Bremen (BL)
1975-76	31	7	Bremen (BL)
1976-77	29	6	Bremen (BL)
1977-78	21	6	Bremen (BL)
1978-79	33	2	Bremen (BL)
1979-82	114	29	Randers Freja (Denmark)
1982-83	15	5	Hvidovre (Denmark)

#42



**Júlio CÉSAR da Silva** (b. 1963)  
*14 A, Brazil, Centre-Back*  
*League champion 1995, 1996*  
*League runner-up 1992, 1994*



*Cup winner 1990*  
*Cup finalist 1992, 2000*  
*Champions Cup 1997*  
*Intercontinental Cup 1997*  
*UEFA Cup 1993*

One of the best markers of the Bundesliga during the 1990s, Julio César appeared very non-chalant and cool as a player. As a defender, he was nearly a complete footballer, technically skilled and with great vision. When Dortmund signed Julio César from Juventus in 1994, the initial plan was to replace Matthias Sammer in the libero role, as Sammer was planned to resume his role as a midfielder. Already in his first game vs. Motherwell in the UEFA Cup, César played disappointingly as libero and Ottmar Hitzfeld switched back during half-time giving Sammer back the libero spot and instead he moved Julio César to the marker role. The very tall Brazilian did so well in that role that for the next few seasons the pairing of Sammer-Julio César was the most impressive central partnership. Julio César was of imposing physical presence and excellent in aerial duels. Due to his excellent technique César was able to play very fairly and hardly had to resort to foul play. He liked to play adventurous and risky which he could afford due to his finesse on the ground and physical robustness.

#### League record

1979-86	-	-	Guarani (Brazil)
1986-87	32	1	Brest (France)
1987-88	37	5	Montpellier (France)
1988-89	26	1	Montpellier (France)
1989-90	30	4	Montpellier (France)
1990-91	29	1	Juventus (Italy)
1991-92	33	1	Juventus (Italy)
1992-93	16	1	Juventus (Italy)
1993-94	11	0	Juventus (Italy)
1994-95	25	1	Dortmund (BL)
1995-96	23	2	Dortmund (BL)
1996-97	10	3	Dortmund (BL)
1997-98	17	1	Dortmund (BL)
1998-99	16	1	Botafogo (Brazil)
1998-99	5	0	Dortmund (BL)
1999-00	3	0	Panathinaikos (Greece)
1999-00	12	0	Bremen (BL)
2000-01	-	-	Rio Branco (Brazil)

## #41



**Walter HEMPEL** (1887-1939)  
 11 A, Germany, Back

A very reliable left-sided back who was essential in his club rising from a third level team to one of the best sides in Germany around 1910. At a time when backs were usually primarily combative and known to hit the ball long without much consideration, simply not very accomplished footballers, Hempel distinguished himself by his ability to take part in cultured build-up and passing moves. He was still rated as one of the best backs of his era by "Kicker" magazine even 20 years after his retirement. The fact that Hempel did not prefer to hit the long ball was actually considered a drawback during his active time as this was the standard procedure expected by a back.

#### Senior club

1908-23 Spfr. Leipzig



**DANTE Bonfim Costa Santos** (b. 1983)  
*13 A (3 goals), Brazil, Centre-Back*  
*League champion 2008, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2015*  
*League runner-up 2000*  
*Cup winner 2013, 2014*  
*Cup finalist 2007*  
*Champions Cup 2013*  
*Intercontinental Cup 2013*

Impressive is his positioning and heading and he's also quite capable offensively with his finesse on the ball and good overview. Dante's one big flaw is his tendency to act careless, even in very important games. At his best Dante is one of the most solid defensive passers and can be a competent organiser of his teammates at the back. Exact anticipation adds to his abilities which makes him a centre back of high quality – if not for his regular lapses in concentration.

*League record*

2001-02	20	0	Juventude (Brazil)
2002-03	20	1	Juventude (Brazil)
2003-04	13	0	Juventude (Brazil)
2003-04	9	0	Lille (France)
2004-05	2	0	Lille (France)
2005-06	1	0	Lille (France)
2005-06	12	1	Charleroi (Belgium)
2006-07	12	1	Charleroi (Belgium)
2006-07	15	0	Standard Liège (Belgium)
2007-08	33	1	Standard Liège (Belgium)
2008-09	15	1	Standard Liège (Belgium)
2008-09	10	3	Mönchengladbach (BL)
2009-10	32	3	Mönchengladbach (BL)
2010-11	18	2	Mönchengladbach (BL)
2011-12	33	0	Mönchengladbach (BL)
2012-13	29	1	Bayern München (BL)
2013-14	29	2	Bayern München (BL)
2014-15	27	0	Bayern München (BL)
2015-16	1	0	Bayern München (BL)
2015-16	24	1	Wolfsburg (BL)
2016-17	31	0	Nice (France)





**Franco FODA** (b. 1966)

*2 A, Germany, Man-Marker/Sweeper/Midfielder*

*League champion 1998, 1999*

*League runner-up 2000*

*Cup winner 1990, 1993, 1997, 1999*

*Cup finalist 1998*

Initially a man-marker then later a libero and defensive midfielder. Technically solid but his greatest assets were his stamina and brute force in one-on-one situations.

*League record*

1983-84	3	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1984-85	34	4	Bielefeld (BL)
1985-86	9	4	Bielefeld (Div. 2)
1985-86	15	1	Saarbrücken (BL)
1986-87	37	2	Saarbrücken (BL)
1987-88	32	2	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1988-89	28	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1989-90	27	3	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1990-91	29	3	Leverkusen (BL)
1991-92	31	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1992-93	31	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1993-94	26	4	Leverkusen (BL)
1994-95	33	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1995-96	28	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1996-97	8	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1996-97	13	0	FC Basel (Switzerland)
1997-98	31	0	Sturm Graz (Austria)
1998-99	27	1	Sturm Graz (Austria)
1999-00	33	0	Sturm Graz (Austria)
2000-01	8	0	Sturm Graz (Austria)

**#38**



**Holger FACH** (b. 1962)

*5 A, Germany, Sweeper/Midfielder*

*League runner-up 1997*

*Cup winner 1995*

A tall, gangly, technically sound sweeper with good finishing skills when advancing forward and a good header of the ball. With his good positional sense he was also frequently deployed as a defensive midfielder, he was known to go about things a bit grimly.

*League record*

1981-82	16	2	Düsseldorf (BL)
1982-83	28	6	Düsseldorf (BL)
1983-84	29	6	Düsseldorf (BL)
1984-85	30	3	Düsseldorf (BL)
1985-86	32	3	Düsseldorf (BL)
1986-87	12	1	Düsseldorf (BL)
1987-88	17	3	Düsseldorf (Div. 2)

1987-88	15	9	Uerdingen (BL)
1988-89	31	6	Uerdingen (BL)
1989-90	25	5	Uerdingen (BL)
1990-91	30	7	Uerdingen (BL)
1991-92	36	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1992-93	21	5	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1993-94	27	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1994-95	18	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1995-96	31	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1996-97	1	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1996-97	24	1	Düsseldorf (BL)
1997-98	10	0	Düsseldorf (Div. 2)
1997-98	10	0	TSV 1860 München (BL)

## #37



**Robert NEUMAIER** (1885-1959)

*3 A, Germany, Back*

*League champion 1909*

A stalwart yet elegant and calm left-sided back who was renown for his good positional play. Neumaier was rated as one the finest of his kind in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Germany.

*Senior club*

1903-1912    Phönix Karlsruhe

## #36



**Dragan HOLCER** (b. 1945)

*52 A, Yugoslavia, Sweeper*

*League champion 1971, 1974, 1975*

*League runner-up 1979*

*Cup winner 1972, 1973, 1974*

*Cup finalist 1969*

Holcer was born at the end of World War II as the son of a Slovenian partisan who had already been killed in action by the time of his birth. He started out as a forward in the early-1960s but soon settled as a man-marking defender by the late-1960s. When he played for Stuttgart, the tall, stout and rugged Yugoslavian international played as a sweeper with excellent aerial presence.

#### *League record*

1963-64	20	2	Radnicki (Yugoslavia)
1964-65	22	3	Radnicki (Yugoslavia)
1965-66	28	3	Radnicki (Yugoslavia)
1966-67	26	0	Radnicki (Yugoslavia)
1967-68	28	0	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1968-69	34	0	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1969-70	28	0	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1970-71	33	0	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1971-72	31	0	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1972-73	31	0	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1973-74	26	0	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1974-75	4	0	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1975-76	35	0	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 2)
1976-77	38	1	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 2)
1977-78	34	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1978-79	31	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1979-80	28	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1980-81	13	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1981-82	12	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)

## #35



**Thomas HÖRSTER** (b. 1956)

*4 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder/Libero*  
*UEFA Cup 1988*

Another defensive midfielder who was converted into a libero over the course of his career. Today he is most remembered for his performance as a libero, a position he excelled in. Hörster was a player of high technical standard and capable of reading the game superbly and was rated as one of the strongest in the libero position during the 1980s.

#### *League record*

1974-75	10	0	SW Essen (Div. 2)
1975-76	27	3	SW Essen (Div. 2)
1976-77	35	5	SW Essen (Div. 2)
1977-78	37	4	Leverkusen (Div. 2)
1978-79	35	6	Leverkusen (Div. 2)
1979-80	32	3	Leverkusen (BL)
1980-81	29	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1981-82	24	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1982-83	28	3	Leverkusen (BL)
1983-84	27	4	Leverkusen (BL)
1984-85	31	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1985-86	31	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1986-87	32	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1987-88	25	0	Leverkusen (BL)

1988-89	27	0	Leverkusen (BL)
1989-90	32	0	Leverkusen (BL)
1990-91	14	0	Leverkusen (BL)

## #34



### **Frank VERLAAT** (b. 1968)

*1 A, Netherlands, Libero*

*League runner-up 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 2004*

*Cup winner 1987, 1994, 1997*

*Cup finalist 2004*

*CWC winner 1987*

*CWC finalist 1998*

One of the best central defenders of the 1990s, a classic chief of the defense, excellent at heading, solid and seasoned. With Verlaet at the helm, Stuttgart possessed one of the most accomplished flat back four defenses of the Bundesliga, itself a rarity during the 1990s, when most teams played with a sweeper and two markers in the 3-5-2 system. Technically sound, the Dutchman was an unflashy player with excellent passing skill, a good eye and a clean tackling. At his best, Verlaet was almost flawless defensively, very composed in his actions. Annoyingly for Verlaet, the Dutch bondscoach Guus Hiddink ignored him completely. His Stuttgart manager Joachim Löw commented this as follows: "I am sure the Netherlands will win the World Cup next year in France (1998) because a team that can do without Verlaet surely must stand above all other teams." Due to his supreme positioning his lack of pace hardly ever put him in trouble.

### *League record*

1986-87	3	0	Ajax (Netherlands)
1987-88	10	2	Ajax (Netherlands)
1988-89	2	0	Ajax (Netherlands)
1989-90	20	1	Lausanne (Switzerland)
1990-91	22	2	Lausanne (Switzerland)
1991-92	22	6	Lausanne (Switzerland)
1992-93	37	3	Auxerre (France)
1993-94	36	4	Auxerre (France)
1994-95	36	8	Auxerre (France)
1995-96	18	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1996-97	27	4	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1997-98	30	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1998-99	29	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1999-00	21	3	Ajax (Netherlands)
2000-01	19	1	Bremen (BL)
2001-02	33	2	Bremen (BL)
2002-03	29	2	Bremen (BL)
2003-04	19	2	Austria Wien (Austria)
2004-05	24	0	Sturm Graz (Austria)
2005-06	31	2	Sturm Graz (Austria)
2006-07	32	1	Sturm Graz (Austria)

#33



**Manfred (Manni) BINZ** (b. 1965)  
*14 A (1 goal), Germany, Midfielder/Libero*  
*Cup winner 1988*  
*Euro finalist 1992*

A playmaker by trade, he became one of the best liberos of the Bundesliga in the late-1980s who possessed a very sound technique and strategic qualities but also a phlegmatic nature. He was the successor to Klaus Augenthaler as standard libero of the German national team in the early-1990s. After a poor 1992 Euro, where he was dropped in the middle of the tournament, he was never again capped, but continued to be a vital player for Eintracht Frankfurt.

*League record*

1984-85	3	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1985-86	2	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1986-87	32	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1987-88	34	2	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1988-89	34	2	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1989-90	34	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1990-91	34	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1991-92	38	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1992-93	34	2	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1993-94	32	3	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1994-95	34	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1995-96	25	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1996-97	-	-	Brescia (Italy – Div. 2)
1997-98	8	0	Brescia (Italy)
1997-98	12	0	Dortmund (BL)
1998-99	1	0	Dortmund (BL)
1999-00	31	4	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)

#32



**Ferdinand (Ferdl) WENAUER** (1939-1992)*4 A, Germany, Centre Half/Sweeper**League Champion 1961, 1968**League runner-up 1962**Cup winner 1962*

Of tall stature, Ferdinand Wenauer was an athletic centre half and later sweeper who played 14 seasons in the first team of Nürnberg and is one of the players associated with their successful side during the 1960s. Very good at positioning and one-on-one situations, Wenauer was an almost purely defensive player, regarded as one of the best in Germany during the early-1960s. Together with Ludwig Müller, Wenauer formed one of the strongest central defensive partnerships in German football during the 1960s.

*League record*

1958-59	28	0	Nürnberg (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	26	0	Nürnberg (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	28	0	Nürnberg (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	30	0	Nürnberg (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	29	0	Nürnberg (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	18	0	Nürnberg (BL)
1964-65	24	0	Nürnberg (BL)
1965-66	32	0	Nürnberg (BL)
1966-67	26	0	Nürnberg (BL)
1967-68	34	0	Nürnberg (BL)
1968-69	34	0	Nürnberg (BL)
1969-70	38	3	Nürnberg (Div. 2)
1970-71	34	4	Nürnberg (Div. 2)
1971-72	21	0	Nürnberg (Div. 2)

**#31****Ernst HOLLSTEIN** (1886-1950)*6 A, Germany, Back**League champion 1910**League runner-up 1912*

A sleek and elegant back (mostly on the left side) who was known as the "master of heading" in Germany. His most outstanding attribute was however his exceptional technique and positional play which enabled him to neutralize onrushing forwards solely by using non-tackling means. Additionally, his passing skills were such that he was known to hit very long yet precise passes to the outside forwards as soon as he was in possession. A remarkable defender for his time.

*Senior clubs*

1904-08 Phönix Karlsruhe

1908-12 FV Karlsruhe



#30



**Hans (Hennes) STUBB** (1906-1973)  
*10 A (1 goal), Germany, Back*  
*League runner-up 1932*

Stubb started out as an outside left playing for Ostend Frankfurt. He was signed by Eintracht as an outside left in 1929. Soon after he joined Eintracht, he was helping out as a back and played so well that he remained in that position for the rest of his career. Stubb was an imposing player, physical but quick-footed and swift in his movements. Due to his size he was able to cover a lot of ground rapidly. A drawback was his temper and at times flippancy. His most famous moment came on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1934, when he managed to score a goal from a freekick which some spectators claimed to have been scored from a distance of incredible 60 metres in the game Germany against Hungary. The wind had a helpful hand in that goal as it was a very windy day.

*League record*

1925-29	-	-	Ostend Frankfurt
1929-30	15	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main/Hesse)
1930-31	20	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main/Hesse)
1931-32	20	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main/Hesse)
1932-33	25	3	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main/Hesse)
1933-34	15	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)
1934-35	19	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)
1935-36	5	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)
1936-37	18	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)
1937-38	15	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)
1938-39	3	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)
1939-40	-	-	inactive
1940-41	-	-	inactive
1941-42	12	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)
1942-43	12	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)
1943-44	3	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – South)

#29



**Per MERTESACKER** (b. 1984)  
104 A (4 goals), Germany, Centre-Back  
League runner-up 2008, 2016  
Cup winner 2009, 2014, 2015, 2017  
Cup finalist 2010  
UEFA Cup finalist 2009  
World Cup winner 2014  
Euro finalist 2008

Apart from his most obvious asset, his outstanding heading, Mertesacker distinguished himself with his very skillful conduct in one-on-one situations and good positioning. A good reader of the game, Mertesacker did not need to show great pace as his positional sense is outstanding. Notable for his absolute fairness in defensive matters. Per Mertesacker is one of those players that did generally better in the national team than in his club teams. During his years in Bremen Mertesacker formed a towering defensive partnership with the equally tall Brazilian Naldo (both 1,98 metres). The two tall players were complementary, Naldo the offensively more forceful instigator and Mertesacker the calm defensive anchor. Both of them operated on a very high level in terms of initiating play from defensive.

League record

2003-04	13	0	Hannover (BL)
2004-05	31	2	Hannover (BL)
2005-06	30	5	Hannover (BL)
2006-07	25	2	Bremen (BL)
2007-08	32	1	Bremen (BL)
2008-09	23	2	Bremen (BL)
2009-10	33	5	Bremen (BL)
2010-11	30	2	Bremen (BL)
2011-12	4	0	Bremen (BL)
2011-12	21	0	Arsenal (England)
2012-13	34	3	Arsenal (England)
2013-14	35	2	Arsenal (England)
2014-15	35	0	Arsenal (England)
2015-16	24	0	Arsenal (England)
2016-17	1	0	Arsenal (England)

#28



**Thomas HELMER** (b. 1965)  
68 A (5 goals), Germany, Man-Marker/Sweeper  
League Champion 1994, 1997, 1999  
League runner-up 1993, 1996, 1998  
Cup winner 1989, 1998  
Cup finalist 1999  
UEFA Cup 1995  
Champions Cup finalist 1999  
Euro winner 1996  
Euro finalist 1992

Originally a left-footed man-marker and also a left back when he started out in the mid-1980s, the intelligent Helmer became noted as a libero with a very good touch around 1990 playing for Dortmund. At that time, he made his first international steps when Germany was looking for a successor to Klaus Augenthaler at the libero position after the 1990 World Cup. When he joined Bayern in 1992 he reversed back to playing as man-marker for the rest of his career, since at Bayern, Olaf Thon, Lothar Matthäus and Thomas Strunz were all preferred playing as Libero. In all these roles Helmer played very convincingly, always interpreting them in an offensive way. Good distribution and dangerous at set pieces due to his height.

#### *League record*

1984-85	4	0	Bielefeld (BL)
1985-86	35	5	Bielefeld (Div. 2)
1986-87	34	0	Dortmund (BL)
1987-88	30	5	Dortmund (BL)
1988-89	30	3	Dortmund (BL)
1989-90	34	4	Dortmund (BL)
1990-91	33	2	Dortmund (BL)
1991-92	29	2	Dortmund (BL)
1992-93	34	7	Bayern München (BL)
1993-94	28	2	Bayern München (BL)
1994-95	24	4	Bayern München (BL)
1995-96	32	4	Bayern München (BL)
1996-97	24	4	Bayern München (BL)
1997-98	28	1	Bayern München (BL)
1998-99	21	2	Bayern München (BL)
1999-00	2	0	Sunderland (England)
1999-00	5	1	Hertha BSC (BL)

## **#27**



### **Wilhelm (Bubi) SOLD (1911-1995)**

*12 A, Germany, Centre-Half*

*League runner-up 1943*

*Cup winner 1939*

The centre-half of FV Saarbrücken was equipped with great vision, aerial prowess and positional play. Additionally to his defensive qualities he was also very useful in build-up due to his good ball skills and really excellent passing ability. He found it hard to get past Ludwig Goldbrunner in the national team, as Otto Nerz valued Goldbrunner's defensive abilities higher than Sold's. Bubi Sold resembled more the old-styled centre-half of the pyramid than the "pure-stopper" centre-half of the WM, which might have been the reason why the WM-fanatic Nerz never fully warmed up to Sold.

#### *Senior clubs*

1930-38	FV Saarbrücken
1938-40	1. FC Nürnberg
1940-42	Tennis Borussia Berlin
1942-43	FV Saarbrücken
1943-44	Gross Bonn
1945-48	1. FC Saarbrücken

#26



**Hans-Günter BRUNS** (b. 1954)  
4 A, Germany, Midfielder/Libero  
League runner-up 1977  
Cup winner 1980  
Cup finalist 1984

A technically superb left-footed player who originally was a dominant player in midfield, not quite in the vein of a playmaker though. Bruns received most fame for his displays as an attacking libero.

*League record*

1974-75	1	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1975-76	18	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1976-77	1	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1976-77	21	9	Wattenscheid (Div. 2)
1977-78	37	16	Wattenscheid (Div. 2)
1978-79	30	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1979-80	2	0	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1979-80	15	0	Düsseldorf (BL)
1980-81	22	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1981-82	32	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1982-83	29	9	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1983-84	33	7	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1984-85	31	8	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1985-86	30	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1986-87	32	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1987-88	33	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1988-89	32	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1989-90	25	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)

#25



**Miroslav KADLEC** (b. 1964)  
*64 A (2 goals), Czechoslovakia, Libero*  
*League champion 1991, 1998*  
*League runner-up 1994*  
*Cup winner 1996*  
*Euro finalist 1996*

An accomplished classic-style libero, strong at heading with good ball control who was often seen surging into midfield initiating attacks of his club Kaiserslautern, where he was a key figure in their successful campaigns during the 1990s. Good distribution and adept at long balls.

#### *League record*

1983-84	26	1	Vitkovice (CSSR)
1984-85	28	1	Cheb (CSSR)
1985-86	28	1	Cheb (CSSR)
1986-87	29	1	Vitkovice (CSSR)
1987-88	28	2	Vitkovice (CSSR)
1988-89	30	8	Vitkovice (CSSR)
1989-90	28	8	Vitkovice (CSSR)
1990-91	28	2	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1991-92	21	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1992-93	32	2	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1993-94	33	6	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1994-95	33	3	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1995-96	31	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1996-97	24	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1997-98	32	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1998-99	26	2	Drnovice (Czech Republic)
1999-00	28	0	Drnovice (Czech Republic)
2000-01	19	0	Drnovice (Czech Republic)
2001-02	24	2	Brno (Czech Republic)

## #24



**Wilfried HANNES** (b. 1957)  
*8 A, Germany, Midfielder/Libero/Stopper*  
*League champion 1976, 1977*  
*League runner-up 1978*  
*UEFA Cup 1979*  
*World Cup finalist 1982*

The one-eyed Libero Wilfried Hannes started out as a centre forward aged 18 in 1975 playing for Borussia Mönchengladbach, however his skillset wasn't sufficient for that position thus he was retreated to a defensive position soon, first as a stopper, then as a libero. As a player he was extremely good at heading and thus quite a goal threat at set-pieces, once even managing 16 goals in a single season. His ball control was above average but not as good as that of other liberos at that time.



#### League record

1975-76	9	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1976-77	21	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1977-78	21	0	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1978-79	22	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1979-80	32	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1980-81	33	16	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1981-82	31	8	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1982-83	23	9	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1983-84	25	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1984-85	23	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1985-86	21	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1986-87	27	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1987-88	21	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1988-89	29	5	Bellinzona (Switzerland)
1989-90	13	1	Aarau (Switzerland)

## #23



**Dieter BAST** (b. 1951)

*Germany, Midfielder/Libero*

A commanding playmaker with a very good technique who was often on the cusp of the German national team but in the end there were always a number of players better than him standing in his way. His big drawback was a lack of pace, which caused him to move back from midfield to central defense where he became one of the Bundesliga's finest liberos. With Beckenbauer as his rolemodel, he was convincing as conductor and leader from the centre of defense.

#### League record

1970-71	22	3	RW Essen (BL)
1971-72	32	8	RW Essen (Div. 2)
1972-73	32	22	RW Essen (Div. 2)
1973-74	34	10	RW Essen (BL)
1974-75	32	5	RW Essen (BL)
1975-76	33	6	RW Essen (BL)
1976-77	28	4	RW Essen (BL)
1977-78	28	9	Bochum (BL)
1978-79	33	6	Bochum (BL)
1979-80	29	1	Bochum (BL)
1980-81	34	5	Bochum (BL)
1981-82	34	2	Bochum (BL)
1982-83	34	1	Bochum (BL)
1983-84	33	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1984-85	31	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1985-86	7	0	Leverkusen (BL)
1986-87	33	1	RW Essen (Div. 2)
1987-88	37	1	RW Essen (Div. 2)
1988-89	32	0	RW Essen (Div. 2)



#22



**NALDO Ronaldo Aparecido Rodrigues** (b. 1982)

*4 A, Brazil, Centre-Back*  
*League runner-up 2006, 2008, 2015*  
*Cup winner 2009, 2015*  
*Cup finalist 2010*  
*UEFA Cup finalist 2009*  
*Copa America 2007*

Very dangerous at setpieces with his hard shot and resolute aerial prowess, very engaged offensively and a dangerous finisher. Reliable and consistent, Naldo has always been a defensive lynchpin for the teams that he played. His heading is really outstanding, both defensively and offensively. For many seasons Naldo was the most dangerous central defender in front of the opposition's goal of the Bundesliga. Despite his tallness an elegant player, solid in everything he does and reliable, a real leader that can make a difference.

*League record*

2005-06	32	2	Bremen (BL)
2006-07	32	6	Bremen (BL)
2007-08	32	3	Bremen (BL)
2008-09	28	3	Bremen (BL)
2009-10	31	5	Bremen (BL)
2010-11	0	0	Bremen (BL)
2011-12	18	3	Bremen (BL)
2012-13	31	6	Wolfsburg (BL)
2013-14	33	3	Wolfsburg (BL)
2014-15	32	7	Wolfsburg (BL)
2015-16	29	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2016-17	19	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)

#21



**Jakob (Knöd) BENDER** (1910-1981)  
9 A, Germany, Centre-Half  
League champion 1933  
League runner-up 1936  
Cup finalist 1937

Knöd Bender was instrumental in establishing Fortuna Düsseldorf as a major club in German football during the 1930s. So outstanding was his role for Fortuna that his name was still synonymous with the club for many years after his retirement. While Bender was a rough, uncompromising stopper he possessed remarkable technical skills which enabled him to fulfill a playmaker role for his team in the mould of the pyramid centre-half in the first half of his career. As he grew older, he became more conservative in his approach and earned the nickname "concrete block". He might have managed more than 9 caps if not for a recurring knee injury that plagued him for many years. As a stopper Bender had a very good record against some of the best centre-forwards active in German football, like Franz Binder, Matthias Sindelar, Fritz Szepan, Ernst Kuzorra and Karl Hohmann.

Senior club  
1927-1939 Düsseldorf

#20



**Patrik ANDERSSON** (b. 1971)  
96 A (3 goals), Sweden, Centre-Back  
League champion 2000, 2001  
Cup winner 1995, 2000  
Champions cup 2001

The Swedish centre-back was at his best playing in a flat back four. Not the paciest player, he made up for that with his good reading of the game and positioning. Very good at heading and strong-willed.

League record

1988-89	15	1	Malmö (Sweden)
1989-90	20	2	Malmö (Sweden)
1990-91	28	2	Malmö (Sweden)
1991-92	27	7	Malmö (Sweden)
1992-93	11	0	Blackburn (England)
1993-94	1	0	Blackburn (England)
1993-94	17	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1994-95	34	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1995-96	33	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1996-97	32	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1997-98	30	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1998-99	28	0	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1999-00	16	0	Bayern München (BL)
2000-01	22	1	Bayern München (BL)
2001-02	12	0	Barcelona (Spain)
2002-03	3	0	Barcelona (Spain)
2003-04	4	0	Barcelona (Spain)
2003-04	10	1	Malmö (Sweden)
2004-05	9	0	Malmö (Sweden)

#19



**Jens NOWOTNY** (b. 1974)  
48 A ( 1 goal), Germany, Libero/Midfielder  
League champion 2007  
League runner-up 1999, 2000, 2002  
Cup winner 2007  
Cup finalist 1996, 2002  
Champions Cup finalist 2002

A technically exceptional libero with strengths in build up and venturing forwards where his close ball control made him a good offensive dribbler but he had weaknesses in one-on-one situations, a lack of pace and only average positioning. With eight red cards Jens Nowotny is the record-holder in Bundesliga history. For Germany Nowotny was mainly deployed as a man-marker or defensive midfielder.

League record

1991-92	4	0	Karlsruhe (BL)
1992-93	29	3	Karlsruhe (BL)
1993-94	20	2	Karlsruhe (BL)
1994-95	26	1	Karlsruhe (BL)
1995-96	24	1	Karlsruhe (BL)
1996-97	32	0	Leverkusen (BL)
1997-98	23	0	Leverkusen (BL)
1998-99	33	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1999-00	33	1	Leverkusen (BL)
2000-01	28	1	Leverkusen (BL)
2001-02	29	0	Leverkusen (BL)
2002-03	1	0	Leverkusen (BL)
2003-04	22	1	Leverkusen (BL)
2004-05	16	0	Leverkusen (BL)
2005-06	14	0	Leverkusen (BL)
2005-07	10	0	Dinamo Zagreb (Croatia)

#18



**Gerhard (Gerd) ZEWE** (b. 1950)*4 A, Germany, Midfielder/Libero**Cup winner 1979, 1980**Cup finalist 1978**CWC finalist 1979*

Gerd Zewe was a defensive midfielder with great ball control, overview and playmaker qualities. He gradually evolved into Fortuna Düsseldorf's libero by the mid-1970s who would switch to attack as soon as he was in possession. In Düsseldorf, Zewe for many years was one of the most important players and the brain of the team. In the late-1970s Zewe was among the handful of players who were fancied as successors of Franz Beckenbauer in the national team.

*League record*

1969-70	22	0	Neunkirchen (Div. 2)
1970-71	30	1	Neunkirchen (Div. 2)
1971-72	30	5	Neunkirchen (Div. 2)
1972-73	34	9	Düsseldorf (BL)
1973-74	33	4	Düsseldorf (BL)
1974-75	32	4	Düsseldorf (BL)
1975-76	34	0	Düsseldorf (BL)
1976-77	25	2	Düsseldorf (BL)
1977-78	33	3	Düsseldorf (BL)
1978-79	29	1	Düsseldorf (BL)
1979-80	33	5	Düsseldorf (BL)
1980-81	25	2	Düsseldorf (BL)
1981-82	22	1	Düsseldorf (BL)
1982-83	34	1	Düsseldorf (BL)
1983-84	34	6	Düsseldorf (BL)
1984-85	32	2	Düsseldorf (BL)
1985-86	25	1	Düsseldorf (BL)
1986-87	15	0	Düsseldorf (BL)

**#17****Matthias HERGET** (b. 1955)*39 A (4 goals), Germany, Defensive Midfielder/Libero**Cup winner 1985**World Cup finalist 1986*

A classic libero who in possession immediately acted as a forward-moving midfielder, Herget was gifted with a superb technique and a love for adventure on the pitch. From 1983 to 1988 Herget was regarded as one of the very best Bundesliga players. Not at all a tackler, the lightfooted Herget was a libero in the vein of Beckenbauer who wanted to solve every defensive situation in a playful way. Very good at short and long passes and a good reader of the game. A downside was his habit to sometimes lose concentration which could lead to severe blunders, hence his reputation as a happy-go-lucky chap. Herget is still the only player in German professional football who managed to score a hattrick with three penalties.

#### *League record*

1976-77	34	0	Bochum (BL)
1977-78	30	2	Bochum (BL)
1978-79	32	2	RW Essen (Div. 2)
1979-80	37	16	RW Essen (Div. 2)
1980-81	37	11	RW Essen (Div. 2)
1981-82	36	9	RW Essen (Div. 2)
1982-83	35	5	Uerdingen (Div. 2)
1983-84	30	8	Uerdingen (BL)
1984-85	31	5	Uerdingen (BL)
1985-86	29	4	Uerdingen (BL)
1986-87	27	3	Uerdingen (BL)
1987-88	32	2	Uerdingen (BL)
1988-89	24	2	Uerdingen (BL)
1989-90	19	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 2)

## #16



#### **Otto (Ötte) TIBULSKI** (1912-1991)

*2 A, Germany, Centre-Half/Half Back*

*League champion 1934, 1935, 1937, 1939, 1940, 1942*

*League runner-up 1933, 1938, 1941*

*Cup winner 1937*

*Cup finalist 1935, 1936, 1941, 1942*

Ötte Tibulski began his professional career as an outside right but quickly established himself as a right half back and from 1936 on as an elegant, technically versed and sophisticated centre-half. Next to Ernst Kuzorra and Fritz Szepan, Tibulski was most associated with the all-conquering Schalke 04 side of the 1930s and early-1940s. He was known for his brilliant distribution from the back of the Schalke defense. Looking back, Herbert Burdenski once characterised Tibulski as "the first Beckenbauer" of German football. While he still is one of the most highly-decorated players in German club football, his international career was unsatisfying, as he was only engaged in 2 caps. Both Otto Nerz and Sepp Herberger preferred a different type of centre-half, to them, Tibulski's style of play was too finesse and not straightforward enough. Also, he was not tall enough for the role Nerz/Herberger envisioned for a central defender. Despite his lack of stature Tibulski was actually an effective header of the ball, defensively and offensively.

#### *League record (incomplete)*

1930-41	-	-	FC Schalke 04
1940-41	-	-	Hertha BSC
1941-44	-	-	FC Schalke 04
1946-47	-	-	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)
1947-48	23	1	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)
1948-49	11	4	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)

#15



**Herbert (Ertl) ERHARDT** (1930-2010)  
*50 A (1 goal), Germany, Full Back/Centre-Half*  
*World Cup winner 1954*

Made his debut in 1948 aged 18 as a right half for Fürth. An athletic defender with a good touch on the ball and impressive aerial presence, he first played as a full back before switching to centre half by the late-1950s. In both positions he was counted among the very best in 1950s German football. Known for his hard tackling and doggedness, Erhardt captained Germany between 1959 and 1962 and was a member of the 1954 (did not play), 1958 and 1962 World Cup squads.

*League record*

1947-48	1	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1948-49	-	-	Fürth (Div. 2)
1949-50	3	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1950-51	25	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1951-52	28	1	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1952-53	29	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1953-54	30	3	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1954-55	29	12	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1955-56	16	2	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1956-57	30	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1957-58	28	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1958-59	28	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	30	1	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	30	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	28	0	Fürth (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	28	1	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	5	0	Bayern München (Div. 2)

#14





**Marcelo BORDON** (b. 1976)

*1 A, Brazil, Centre-Back*

*League runner-up 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010*

*Cup finalist 2005*

*Copa America 2004*

A dry and humourless central defender, the Brazilian was one of the very best centre backs in Germany during the 2000s. A defensive rock, immensely physical and robust, Marcelo Bordon's positioning was very good, he could accelerate quickly and he had a powerful left-footed shot. Bordon's mental strength (very useful his offensive heading) and winning mentality was exceptional. His bad luck was that in Lucio an even better player was available to the Brazilian national team and thus Bordon's international exploits were limited.

*League record*

1994-99	70	2	FC São Paulo (Brazil)
1999-00	23	2	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2000-01	28	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2001-02	28	3	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2002-03	26	2	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2003-04	24	4	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2004-05	27	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2005-06	31	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2006-07	28	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2007-08	31	5	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2008-09	21	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2009-10	30	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2010-11	11	1	Al-Rayyan (Qatar)

**#13**



**Klaus-Dieter SIELOFF** (1942-2011)

*14 A (5 goals), Germany, Libero*

*League champion 1970, 1971*

*League runner-up 1974*

*Cup winner 1973*

*World Cup finalist 1966*

A classic offensive libero, one of the strongest of the 1960s and early-1970s, a defensive anchor with a very strong personality and charisma who helped turn the young, naïve Mönchengladbach side of the 1960s into a serious international contender when he joined them in 1969. An excellent technical player with good positioning and reading of the game, Sieloff's distribution from the back played a vital part in his rise to stardom as did his surging ahead in a forceful, less elegant way than Beckenbauer, but with similar panache. Obviously Sieloff never had a real chance at a breakthrough in the national team, as even Beckenbauer himself did not get to play in his preferred position in the national team since Helmut Schön for a long time preferred a strictly defensive sweeper (Willi Schulz).

*League record*

1960-61	7	0	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	14	1	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	19	0	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	22	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1964-65	27	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)

1965-66	25	6	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1966-67	22	6	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1967-68	27	6	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1968-69	18	2	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1969-70	33	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1970-71	33	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1971-72	25	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1972-73	6	0	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1973-74	26	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1974-75	22	3	Aachen (Div. 2)
1975-76	21	0	Aachen (Div. 2)

## #12



### **Josef (Jupp) POSIPAL** (1927-1997)

*32 A (1 goal), Germany, Centre-Half/Right Back*

*League runner-up 1957, 1958*

*Cup finalist 1956*

*World Cup winner 1954*

Jupp Posipal started his career as a forward when he joined Hamburg in 1949 where the manager Georg Knöpfle reskilled him as a centre half. In this position Posipal quickly rose to international fame and was considered as one of the best centre halves in Europe by 1953. A fixture in the German national team straight from his debut in 1951 (as a half back), Posipal was invited to represent a European XI in October 1953 in a match against England. Unsurprisingly Posipal started the 1954 World Cup as the undisputed no. 1 centre half of Germany but during this tournament Posipal's form – troubled by a little injury - dropped and he was soon replaced by Werner Liebrich, who proved to be in the form of his life. Posipal was deployed as a right back instead and in this new role he regained his self-confidence and form. From that moment on Posipal was considered an all-round defensive player who could be used in both roles. Posipal was a talented track and field athlete in his youth who could run 100 meters in exactly 11 seconds.

### *League record*

1947-48	-	-	Arminia Hannover (Div. 1 – North)
1948-49	22	5	Arminia Hannover (Div. 1 – North)
1949-50	30	2	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)
1950-51	28	0	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)
1951-52	29	3	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)
1952-53	29	3	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)
1953-54	27	3	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)
1954-55	26	0	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)
1955-56	28	0	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)
1956-57	28	0	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)
1957-58	26	2	Hamburg (Div. 1 – North)



**Horst BLANKENBURG** (b. 1947)  
*Germany, Midfielder/Libero*  
*League Champion 1968, 1972, 1973*  
*League runner-up 1971*  
*Cup winner 1971, 1972, 1976*  
*Champions Cup 1971, 1972, 1973*  
*CWC winner 1977*  
*Intercontinental Cup 1972*

His great success came while playing abroad, within Germany his success was not comparable to his time playing for Ajax. A midfielder by trade, Blankenburg achieved his international breakthrough as the unlikely successor to Velibor Vasovic at Ajax in 1971. As libero, Blankenburg impressed with his outstanding positional ability and with his very good instigating of offensive actions. While he was considered to be one of the best defenders in Europe in 1973, upon returning to Germany playing for Hamburg in 1975 he could not live up to the expectations. Due to the libero position being blocked by Franz Beckenbauer, apparently it was considered to naturalize Blankenburg so that he could play for the Netherlands in the 1974 World Cup. Hennes Weisweiler once stated that to him Blankenburg embodied his ideal of a sweeper.

*League record*

1967-68	0	0	Nürnberg (BL)
1968-69	27	0	Wiener SC (Austria)
1969-70	31	1	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1970-71	14	0	TSV 1860 München (Div. 2)
1970-71	13	0	Ajax (Netherlands)
1971-72	30	0	Ajax (Netherlands)
1972-73	30	0	Ajax (Netherlands)
1973-74	33	3	Ajax (Netherlands)
1974-75	30	0	Ajax (Netherlands)
1975-76	31	1	Hamburg (BL)
1976-77	13	0	Hamburg (BL)
1977-78	13	0	Xamax (Switzerland)
1977-78	9	0	Chicago Sting (United States)
1978-79	21	0	Chicago Sting (United States)
1979-80	10	0	Hasselt (Belgium)
1979-80	8	0	Chicago Sting (United States)
1980-81	22	0	Münster (Div. 2)



**Klaus AUGENTHALER** (b. 1957)*27 A, Germany, Stopper/Libero**League champion 1980, 1981, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990**League runner-up 1988, 1991**Cup winner 1982, 1984, 1986**Cup finalist 1985**Champions Cup 1976**Champions Cup finalist 1982, 1987**Intercontinental Cup 1976**World Cup winner 1990**World Cup finalist 1986*

As a junior player Augenthaler was quite a talent at playmaking however when he joined Bayern in 1975, he was initially only sporadically used as a defensive midfielder. After Franz Beckenbauer left Bayern in 1977, the long-time stopper Schwarzenbeck became the libero and Augenthaler gradually occupied the vacant role of the stopper. In this new role Augenthaler became an uncompromising man-marker with a quick temper which caused many a booking. By 1982 the libero position at Bayern was vacant again and Pal Csernai decided to give Augenthaler a chance in this important role. As a libero, Augenthaler became the decisive player at Bayern, very capable at buildup, spraying long, precise passes from a deep position, moving forward and often looking to complete a move with his very strong and hard shooting. Drawbacks were his lack of pace and sometimes a habit of losing concentration.

*League record*

1975-76	0	0	Bayern München (BL)
1976-77	0	0	Bayern München (BL)
1977-78	23	2	Bayern München (BL)
1978-79	28	3	Bayern München (BL)
1979-80	34	2	Bayern München (BL)
1980-81	33	5	Bayern München (BL)
1981-82	33	6	Bayern München (BL)
1982-83	28	5	Bayern München (BL)
1983-84	31	2	Bayern München (BL)
1984-85	32	5	Bayern München (BL)
1985-86	31	4	Bayern München (BL)
1986-87	25	4	Bayern München (BL)
1987-88	24	5	Bayern München (BL)
1988-89	31	6	Bayern München (BL)
1989-90	24	1	Bayern München (BL)
1990-91	27	2	Bayern München (BL)

**#9****Rune BRATSETH** (b. 1961)*60 A (4 goals), Norway, Centre-Back/Libero**League Champion 1988, 1993**League runner-up 1995**Cup winner 1991**Cup finalist 1989, 1990**CWC winner 1992*

The tall, athletic Norwegian defender came to Bremen in 1986 where Otto Rehhagel first used him as a man-marker, a position he soon made a name for himself due to his fairness and calm way of going on about his task. However he really started to blossom when he was freed of marking duties in late-1988 when Rehhagel looked for a new libero as the injury-prone Gunnar Sauer needed to be replaced permanently.

Rehhagel realized pretty soon that a very intelligent player like Bratseth was somewhat wasted as a marker, and when Sauer missed more and more games the decision was easy. His interpretation of the free role was conservative, more in tradition of a Willi Schulz than a Franz Beckenbauer, owing to Rehhagel's conservative approach as well as Bratseth's upbringing as a Scandinavian central defender in a flat back four, where no nonsense mentalities were more common for defenders than in the continental game with its libero tradition. On the pitch Bratseth distinguished himself with his fast acceleration (for his type of player), excellent positioning, great overview, technique and his personality.

#### *League record*

1982-83	19	1	Rosenborg (Norway)
1983-84	21	1	Rosenborg (Norway)
1984-85	21	0	Rosenborg (Norway)
1985-86	22	0	Rosenborg (Norway)
1986-87	17	1	Bremen (BL)
1987-88	31	0	Bremen (BL)
1988-89	32	5	Bremen (BL)
1989-90	29	2	Bremen (BL)
1990-91	31	1	Bremen (BL)
1991-92	34	0	Bremen (BL)
1992-93	29	2	Bremen (BL)
1993-94	26	1	Bremen (BL)
1994-95	1	0	Bremen (BL)

## #8



**Jérôme BOATENG** (b. 1988)

68 A (1 goal), Germany, Centre-Back/Right Back

League champion 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

League runner-up 2012

Cup winner 2011, 2013, 2014, 2016

Cup finalist 2012

Champions Cup 2013

Champions Cup finalist 2012

Intercontinental Cup 2013

World Cup winner 2014

Rated slightly below Mats Hummels because he is more prone to carelessness and unnecessary rough play. Equal to Hummels only when he is fully concentrated over a long period. Incredibly athletic and robust, Boateng impresses with his resolve and determination in defensive duels but he's also very strong on the ball. His passing is on par with that of Hummels, both are experts at spraying long precision passes from the back. Boateng impresses with his tremendous presence and is hard to beat in sprint due to his pace and he is equally strong at building up with both feet. Boateng's pace is crucial for his role in central defense and in his many outings as a right back. Germany never had a central defensive partnership like Boateng and Hummels in which *both* players are highly gifted ball playing defenders. Boateng is faster than Hummels, his defensive heading is slightly superior, he is more rigid in defensive duels. Hummels on the other side can read a game slightly better and hence is better in instigating offensive actions.



He perceives the space ahead of him better, his decision-making is better, slightly better at short passing, Hummels' offensive header is clearly superior to Boateng's. Boateng is better at marking, especially small, witty, nimble players. Both are thus really complementary of each other. Hummels and Boateng thus may be the best defensive partnership in German football history and one of the best in the world today.

#### *League record*

2006-07	10	0	Hertha BSC (BL)
2007-08	27	0	Hertha BSC (BL)
2008-09	21	0	Hertha BSC (BL)
2009-10	27	0	Hertha BSC (BL)
2010-11	16	0	Manchester City (England)
2011-12	27	0	Bayern München (BL)
2012-13	26	2	Bayern München (BL)
2013-14	25	1	Bayern München (BL)
2014-15	27	0	Bayern München (BL)
2015-16	19	0	Bayern München (BL)
2016-17	13	0	Bayern München (BL)

## #7



#### **Klaus FICHTEL** (b. 1944)

*23 A (1 goal), Germany, Libero/Stopper*

*League runner-up 1972, 1977, 1983*

*Cup winner 1972*

*Cup finalist 1969*

Klaus Fichtel started out as a central defensive midfielder but quickly evolved into one of the Bundesliga's all-time best sweepers. A very calm and sober presence in defense, Klaus 'Tanne' Fichtel was always the undisputed defensive anchorman of Schalke 04 and later Werder Bremen for roughly 18 successive seasons. Not only an outstanding defender but also a capable conductor from the back. Fichtel was still playing in top flight football at the age 43 years and 5 months, retiring after 552 Bundesliga games in the summer of 1988. His international career was promising but ended prematurely because of his involvement in the 1971 Bundesliga scandal. For Germany, he was either deployed as a stopper or as a defensive midfielder.

#### *League record*

1965-66	34	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1966-67	34	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1967-68	34	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1968-69	29	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1969-70	32	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1970-71	29	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1971-72	33	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1972-73	18	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1973-74	14	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1974-75	29	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1975-76	32	4	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1976-77	34	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)



1977-78	22	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1978-79	34	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1979-80	29	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1980-81	42	0	Bremen (Div. 2)
1981-82	34	0	Bremen (BL)
1982-83	33	0	Bremen (BL)
1983-84	8	0	Bremen (BL)
1984-85	13	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1985-86	13	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1986-87	3	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1987-88	11	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)

## #6



**Mats HUMMELS** (b. 1988)  
*57 A ( 4 goals), Germany, Centre-Back*  
*League champion 2011, 2012, 2017*  
*League runner-up 2013, 2014, 2016*  
*Cup winner 2012*  
*Cup finalist 2008, 2014, 2015, 2016*  
*Champions Cup finalist 2013*  
*World Cup winner 2014*

Strong in defensive duels, outstanding in buildup. Astonishingly cool and calm already as a young player, Mats Hummels main asset is his precise passing from the centre of defense. He knows how to read a game, his anticipation is almost flawless. His intuition for space and time gives him and his teammates a sense of reliable security. Hummels can neutralize without needing much physical force, simply with his great anticipation and positional sense, which advantages him in defensive duels to such a degree that he is very often on the ball before the forward and rarely needs to use tackling or physical force to conquer a ball. That being said, he is an expert at tackling if need be. In his playing style Mats Hummels resembles Franz Beckenbauer: eloquent and self-confident, moving upright and elegant, spaying passes with the outside of his foot, generally appearing quite sophisticated. Very strong at setpieces due to his aerial prowess. Extremely composed on the ball and mentally strong, Hummels is rated as one of the most dangerous defenders in front of the opposing goal. Internationally it took a while for Hummels to really become an undisputed starter. Mostly because Joachim Löw preferred a different playing style, not keen on long passes but short passing. Hummels, one of the finest long passers, had to adapt to this but many thought that one of Hummels' main assets was lost when he played for Germany. His breakthrough was the 2014 World Cup when he proved to be one of the best central defenders in the world. Since then, Hummels is undisputed in the national team. Few players have no flaws and Hummels is no exception: he is not always economic in his offensive endeavours, it drains power off him and sometimes it leads to dangerous gaps in the defense. Against swift and nimble forwards Hummels once and a while has his problems.

### *League record*

2006-07	1	0	Bayern München (BL)
2007-08	13	0	Dortmund (BL)
2008-09	12	1	Dortmund (BL)
2009-10	30	5	Dortmund (BL)
2010-11	32	5	Dortmund (BL)
2011-12	33	1	Dortmund (BL)
2012-13	28	1	Dortmund (BL)

2013-14	23	2	Dortmund (BL)
2014-15	24	2	Dortmund (BL)
2015-16	30	2	Dortmund (BL)
2016-17	27	1	Bayern München (BL)

#5



**LÚCIO** Lucimar da Silva Ferreira (b. 1978)

*105 A (4 goals), Brazil, Centre-Back*

*League Champion 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013*

*League runner-up 2002, 2009, 2011, 2015*

*Cup winner 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011*

*Cup finalist 2002*

*Champions Cup 2010*

*Champions Cup finalist 2002*

*Intercontinental Cup 2010*

*World Cup winner 2002*

*Brazilian Footballer 2000*

A distinct leader-type, Lucio was arguably the finest centre-back to play in the Bundesliga in the 2000s (admittedly, a dire phase in German football). His playing style was very spectacular and it could be said that he was unique among central defenders in Germany. Very good defensive skills coupled with great offensive instincts. Stuff of legend are his powerful, determined and hard-to-stop thrusts into the opposing half. Defensively he was skilled in the complete repertoire of a centre back. Put shortly: strong on the ground (very clean tackling), strong in the air (1,88 metres). Lucio was not exactly the same type of player when he served his country Brazil. There, he operated more reserved, less spectacular. Unlike in his club teams (mostly Leverkusen), he was not the undisputed lynchpin of Brazil but one of many stars and thus had to act more considerate there. Lucio's only real weak spots were high diagonal balls, sometimes appalling positional errors and a tendency to start dribbling in the vicinity of his own team's goal. His critics were not few and their main point was the Lucio's offensive endeavours were too risky and he took away space for the offensive players. When Ottmar Hitzfeld joined Bayern in 2007, he told Lucio not to cross the midline. A lot of Lucio's spectacular impact was lost, however he still was the best defensive anchor one could imagine for a team.

*League record*

1997-98	10	0	SC Internacional (Brazil)
1998-99	19	1	SC Internacional (Brazil)
1999-00	16	3	SC Internacional (Brazil)
2000-01	15	5	Leverkusen (BL)
2001-02	29	4	Leverkusen (BL)
2002-03	21	3	Leverkusen (BL)
2003-04	27	3	Leverkusen (BL)
2004-05	32	3	Bayern München (BL)
2005-06	30	2	Bayern München (BL)
2006-07	26	0	Bayern München (BL)
2007-08	24	1	Bayern München (BL)
2008-09	32	1	Bayern München (BL)
2009-10	31	1	Inter (Italy)
2010-11	31	1	Inter (Italy)
2011-12	34	1	Inter (Italy)
2012-13	1	0	Juventus

2012-13	10	1	São Paulo (Brazil)
2013-14	25	2	Palmeiras (Brazil)
2014-15	14	0	Goa (India)
2015-16	5	0	Goa (India)

## #4



### **Bruno PEZZEY** (1955-1994)

*84 A (9 goals), Austria, Midfielder/Libero*  
*League champion 1975, 1977, 1989, 1990*  
*League runner-up 1976, 1985, 1986*  
*Cup winner 1975, 1978, 1981, 1989*  
*Cup finalist 1976, 1988*  
*UEFA Cup 1980*

A libero of great charisma, the tall Austrian always looked like a bored general on the pitch who went on about his job with a certain nonchalance and effortlessness. While his playing style may have looked arrogant, all he did was doing his job extremely well. Due to his great reading of the game and outstanding positioning, Pezzey hardly ever had to tackle, his heading was supreme as was his ball control and technique. He had a habit of chipping balls. Pezzey, who was very athletic and an intimidating physical presence died aged 39 from sudden cardiac death during an ice hockey game.

### *League record*

1974-75	28	3	Innsbruck (Austria)
1975-76	35	7	Innsbruck (Austria)
1976-77	34	4	Innsbruck (Austria)
1977-78	32	5	Innsbruck (Austria)
1978-79	32	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1979-80	14	3	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1980-81	31	10	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1981-82	30	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1982-83	34	6	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1983-84	33	5	Bremen (BL)
1984-85	33	6	Bremen (BL)
1985-86	33	6	Bremen (BL)
1986-87	15	1	Bremen (BL)
1987-88	26	3	Innsbruck (Austria)
1988-89	34	3	Innsbruck (Austria)
1989-90	26	0	Innsbruck (Austria)



**Willibald (Willi) SCHULZ** (b. 1938)

66 A, Germany, Half Back/Sweeper

*Cup finalist 1967*

*CWC finalist 1968*

*World Cup finalist 1966*

Willi Schulz was a hard as iron right half and later sweeper who was known as the 'the master of the sliding tackle'. He captained the national team 20 times and was arguably the most important defensive player during the second half of the 1960s. His international breakthrough was the 1966 World Cup after which he was considered as one of the very best central defenders in Europe. During the next four years, Schulz remained the undisputed standard sweeper of Germany. In November 1968, he was part of the FIFA XI that faced Brazil in Rio de Janeiro. Schulz would have been the standard sweeper of Germany during the 1970 World Cup, but an injury of the meniscus as well as a calf bruise meant that he only started in two of the six World Cup games in Mexico. In his place, Karl-Heinz Schnellinger played as sweeper. After the 1970 World Cup, Schulz retired from international activities. He continued to play for Hamburger SV until 1973. Being a conservative sweeper with no urge to join the attack of his teams, Schulz focused on marshalling his defense. He was noted for his calmness even under pressure, his positional play, his strength at man-to-man duels, his solid passing game, aerial ability and a special expertise at sliding tackling. For these traits as well as his consistency at the top level, Schulz was revered by German national team coach Helmut Schön, who preferred Schulz at the sweeper position to the younger and more adventurous Franz Beckenbauer, who had to play in midfield instead and only inherited the libero role for good after Schulz had retired from international duties in 1970.

*League record*

1956-60	-	-	Günnigfeld (Div. 4)
1960-61	27	5	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)
1961-62	30	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)
1962-63	25	1	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)
1963-64	25	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1964-65	27	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1965-66	24	0	Hamburg (BL)
1966-67	30	2	Hamburg (BL)
1967-68	28	1	Hamburg (BL)
1968-69	27	0	Hamburg (BL)
1969-70	28	0	Hamburg (BL)
1970-71	14	0	Hamburg (BL)
1971-72	31	0	Hamburg (BL)
1972-73	29	0	Hamburg (BL)


**Matthias SAMMER** (b. 1967)

51 A (8 goals), Germany, Central Midfielder/Libero

League champion 1989, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1996

League runner-up 1987, 1993

Cup winner 1990

Champions Cup 1997

UEFA Cup finalist 1993

Intercontinental Cup 1997

Euro winner 1996

Euro finalist 1992

Ballon d'Or 1996

German Footballer 1995, 1996

The last great German libero during a time when this position was already by and large out of fashion. He started his career as a right winger aged 17 in 1984 playing for Dynamo Dresden in East Germany. Originally a slim, pale red-head, Sammer soon drew the attention of West German club managers. In the summer of 1990 after the collapse of the GDR Sammer signed a contract with Bundesliga team VfB Stuttgart. Meanwhile he had evolved into a central defensive midfielder with an offensive mind-set. In 1993 he started to act as a libero playing for Borussia Dortmund. There, he was usually operating in front of his two markers and thus could be described as a very deep sitting defensive midfielder. In the grand scheme of things, Matthias Sammer was probably the only 'real' successor of Franz Beckenbauer, but he came a bit late. Germany had been looking for a player like him ever since Beckenbauer left the country in 1977. It took 16 years to find a roughly comparable player but by that time, due to tactical evolution, the position was in the final stage of being dissolved.

Sammer was one of the most strong-willed players ever to play for Germany, an incredibly dominant character, who immediately switched to offensive actions as soon as he was in possession, either with his passing skills (long and short) or by rushing forward himself, giving in to his instincts as a former winger. He was often seen covering 30, 40 meters in a few seconds, causing panic in his opponents. With his very good shooting technique he was often able to finish such a move himself with a goal. Matthias Sammer was the heart and soul of the Borussia Dortmund team that won two back-to-back German championships and the Champions League in 1997 which was the greatest trophy haul in the history of that club. He was also highly instrumental playing for Germany from 1994 to 1996 when he replaced the ageing Lothar Matthäus in the 'libero' position, topping it off by winning 1996 European Championship and the 'Golden Ball' as the best player in Europe 1996. He was forced to retire aged 30 in 1998 due to a long-going severe knee injury.

*League record*

1985-86	18	8	Dynamo Dresden (East Germany)
1986-87	20	7	Dynamo Dresden (East Germany)
1987-88	19	8	Dynamo Dresden (East Germany)
1988-89	25	6	Dynamo Dresden (East Germany)
1989-90	20	10	Dynamo Dresden (East Germany)
1990-91	30	11	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1991-92	33	9	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1992-93	11	4	Inter (Italy)
1992-93	17	10	Dortmund (BL)
1993-94	29	4	Dortmund (BL)
1994-95	28	4	Dortmund (BL)
1995-96	22	3	Dortmund (BL)
1996-97	16	0	Dortmund (BL)
1998-98	3	0	Dortmund (BL)





### **Franz BECKENBAUER** (b. 1945)

*103 A (14 goals), Germany, Midfielder/Libero*

*League Champion 1969, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1982*

*League runner-up 1970, 1971, 1981*

*Cup winner 1966, 1967, 1969, 1971*

*German Footballer 1966, 1968, 1972, 1976*

*Ballon d'Or 1972, 1976*

*Intercontinental Cup 1976*

*World Cup winner 1974*

*World Cup finalist 1966*

*Euro winner 1972*

*Euro finalist 1976*

Germany's greatest ever player. Renown for inventing the attacking libero, Beckenbauer started his professional career as an outside left, then was withdrawn to the left side of defense where he didn't stay long as his value as a central player soon became obvious to his manager, the former Yugoslavian World Class player Zlatko Cajkovski. Inspired by the Italian attacking full back Giacinto Facchetti, Beckenbauer soon dropped back to the centre of the Bayern defense from where he had the best overview of the pitch in order to initiate his thrusts deep into the opposing half of the pitch. The tactical development of the mid-1960s suited him very well, as the change from the WM-System to the 4-2-4 introduced a fourth, "free" defender who did not have to mark a forward but who was intended to sweep behind the three man-marking defenders. Using this new freedom to the maximum, Beckenbauer became a sensation in German football in the mid-1960s since such elegant and technical players were not known to be playing in defense. Franz Beckenbauer started to play for Bayern Munich in 1958 at the age of 12. Already at this early stage he possessed his later trademarks of lightfootedness, playful elements and creativity to such a degree that he was soon selected to play for the German Youth team. Due to his maturity his way from the youth team to the seniors went smoothly. In 1964-65, Beckenbauer had to play his first professional year with the senior team in the regional Southern German league, where he played in 31 of 36 matches and scored 16 goals. He soon moved back from an inside forward position to central midfield, and almost instantly became the crucial player in Bayern's aspiring team of hopefuls and seasoned players. During the next years, Beckenbauer perfected his interpretation of the "libero" role, the attacking sweeper, which was previously interpreted by players like Jonquet or Santamaria. Through Beckenbauer's interpretation, the sweeper position reached a whole new dimension, for his interpretation was genuine and near to perfection. Beckenbauer changed the picture most people had of German football, from fighting, ruthless, rigid physical style to a more playful, creative, finesse style by interjecting his own elegant way of play, coupled with superior technical skills. With his well-timed, incredibly accurate long and short range passes (usually played with the outside of his right foot), and his overall elegant, seemingly effortless way of playing, Beckenbauer was a new sort of defender, a number 10 playing in central defense.

### *League record*

1964-65	31	16	Bayern München (Div. 2)
1965-66	33	4	Bayern München (BL)
1966-67	33	0	Bayern München (BL)
1967-68	28	4	Bayern München (BL)
1968-69	33	2	Bayern München (BL)
1969-70	34	6	Bayern München (BL)
1970-71	33	3	Bayern München (BL)
1971-72	34	6	Bayern München (BL)
1972-73	34	6	Bayern München (BL)
1973-74	34	4	Bayern München (BL)
1974-75	33	1	Bayern München (BL)



1975-76	34	5	Bayern München (BL)
1976-77	33	3	Bayern München (BL)
1976-77	15	4	New York Cosmos (United States)
1977-78	27	8	New York Cosmos (United States)
1978-79	12	1	New York Cosmos (United States)
1979-80	26	4	New York Cosmos (United States)
1980-81	18	0	Hamburg (BL)
1981-82	10	0	Hamburg (BL)
1982-83	25	2	New York Cosmos (United States)