

#50



Steffen FREUND (b. 1970)
21 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder
League champion 1995, 1996
Champions Cup 1997
Intercontinental Cup 1997
Euro winner 1996

A typical 1990s defensive midfielder, hard as iron, determined, emotional. The extrovert Steffen Freund would chase the ball and the opponent for 90 minutes. While his skill on the ball was average, he would spark his teammates and lived mainly off his industriousness and combative spirit.

League record

1988-89	9	0	Stahl Brandenburg (Div. 1 – East Germany)
1989-90	22	0	Stahl Brandenburg (Div. 1 – East Germany)
1990-91	26	0	Stahl Brandenburg (Div. 1 – East Germany)
1991-92	33	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1992-93	20	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1993-94	19	0	Dortmund (BL)
1994-95	28	2	Dortmund (BL)
1995-96	30	2	Dortmund (BL)
1996-97	2	0	Dortmund (BL)
1997-98	25	2	Dortmund (BL)
1998-99	13	0	Dortmund (BL)
1998-99	17	0	Tottenham (Div. 1 – England)
1999-00	27	0	Tottenham (Div. 1 – England)
2000-01	21	0	Tottenham (Div. 1 – England)
2001-02	20	0	Tottenham (Div. 1 – England)
2002-03	17	0	Tottenham (Div. 1 – England)
2003-04	8	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
2003-04	14	0	Leicester (Div. 1 – England)



Heinz SIMMET (b. 1944)
Germany, Defensive Midfielder
League champion 1978
League runner-up 1973
Cup winner 1968, 1977, 1978
Cup finalist 1970, 1971, 1973

A hard-running fighter in midfield, a workhorse and instigator who was constantly underrated but a crucial puzzle in Köln's technical midfield (Overath, Flohe) of the late-1960s to mid-1970s. Never made it to the national team as his technical level was not good enough. Hacki Wimmer of Mönchengladbach was clearly superior in every aspect. Simmet still holds the record for most successive games of an outfield player – never missed a league game between 1970 and 1977 (258 successive appearances).

League record

1963-64	27	10	Neunkirchen (Div. 2)
1964-65	8	7	Neunkirchen (BL)
1965-66	21	6	Neunkirchen (BL)
1966-67	33	5	RW Essen (BL)
1967-68	31	3	Köln (BL)
1968-69	34	0	Köln (BL)
1969-70	31	5	Köln (BL)
1970-71	34	1	Köln (BL)
1971-72	34	2	Köln (BL)
1972-73	34	8	Köln (BL)
1973-74	34	4	Köln (BL)
1974-75	34	7	Köln (BL)
1975-76	34	2	Köln (BL)
1976-77	34	4	Köln (BL)
1977-78	23	1	Köln (BL)



Herbert (Aki) LÜTKEBOHMERT (1948-1993)

Germany, Central Midfielder

League runner-up 1972, 1977

Cup winner 1972

Cup finalist 1969

FC Schalke's greatest team during the Bundesliga was the side that almost won the German championship in 1971-72 and for that team, Aki Lütkebohmert was one of the "unsung" but very important players. A lightfooted technical player that operated in central midfield with good vision, thorough strategic abilities but most of all a very dynamic and enduring runner, retriever and long range shooter. Like most of that 1971-72 side he was afflicted by suspensions due to involvement in the 1971 Bundesliga scandal. He might have been part of the 1974 World Cup squad without the scandal.

League record

1966-67	30	7	Marl-Hüls (Div. 2)
1967-68	29	3	Marl-Hüls (Div. 2)
1968-69	26	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1969-70	19	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1970-71	34	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1971-72	34	7	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1972-73	25	4	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1973-74	14	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1974-75	32	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1975-76	29	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1976-77	25	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1977-78	25	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1978-79	23	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)

#47



Hans STURM (1935-2007)

3 A, Germany, Half Back/Inside Forward

League champion 1962, 1964

League runner-up 1960, 1963, 1965

Hans Sturm's favourite position on the pitch was that of left half, but he could also play convincingly as centre-half or inside left. A technically sound midfielder with good short passing ability who was very valuable for Köln as a very hard-running and enduring ball carrier known for his long-range shooting. Bizarrely, Sturm managed to play in two World Cups (1958 and 1962) despite only playing in three international games altogether.

League record

1955-56	12	3	Köln (Div. 1 - West)
1956-57	30	10	Köln (Div. 1 - West)
1957-58	29	18	Köln (Div. 1 - West)
1958-59	24	8	Köln (Div. 1 - West)
1959-60	30	6	Köln (Div. 1 - West)
1960-61	30	9	Köln (Div. 1 - West)
1961-62	23	2	Köln (Div. 1 - West)
1962-63	25	2	Köln (Div. 1 - West)
1963-64	30	13	Köln (BL)
1964-65	26	1	Köln (BL)
1965-66	31	3	Köln (BL)
1966-67	26	0	Köln (BL)
1967-68	29	13	Viktoria Köln (Div. 2)
1968-69	20	2	Viktoria Köln (Div. 2)
1969-70	28	6	Viktoria Köln (Div. 2)
1970-71	30	8	Viktoria Köln (Div. 2)



Carsten RAMELOW (b. 1974)

46 A (3 goals), Germany, Defensive Midfielder

League runner-up 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002

Cup finalist 1993, 2002

Champions Cup finalist 2002

World Cup finalist 2002

In Leverkusen, Carsten Ramelow shared the job of defensive chief with libero Jens Nowotny. Ramelow was the tactical extension of manager Christoph Daum in the late-1990s. Less dominant than Jens Jeremies or Steffen Freund, less noticeable in his actions, Ramelow covered a lot of ground and went about his tactical task relentlessly. His one-on-one conduct was among the very best at his time and his passing was of high quality. He was acting like a playmaker from defense in a more accomplished way than most of his German competitors in the same position. A player that operated in the background in a highly effective, consistent way.

League record

1991-92	2	0	Hertha BSC (Div. 2)
1992-93	3	1	Hertha BSC (Div. 2)
1993-94	27	2	Hertha BSC (Div. 2)
1994-95	31	2	Hertha BSC (Div. 2)
1995-96	17	0	Hertha BSC (Div. 2)
1995-96	15	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1996-97	32	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1997-98	33	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1998-99	27	4	Leverkusen (BL)
1999-00	26	0	Leverkusen (BL)
2000-01	32	2	Leverkusen (BL)
2001-02	32	2	Leverkusen (BL)
2002-03	32	1	Leverkusen (BL)
2003-04	31	2	Leverkusen (BL)
2004-05	31	1	Leverkusen (BL)
2005-06	25	1	Leverkusen (BL)
2006-07	13	2	Leverkusen (BL)
2007-08	4	1	Leverkusen (BL)



Hermann NUBER (b. 1935)
Germany, Inside Forward/Half Back/Centre-Half
League runner-up 1959

Still considered as Offenbach's greatest ever player. For 14 seasons Hermann Nuber acted as an offensive centre-half respectively inside forward, later central midfielder and by the end of his career as a sweeper. Nicknamed "Iron Hermann", he was instrumental in Offenbach almost winning the championship 1959. A technically strong player whose main asset however was his iron will and forceful playing style. A warhorse with great football intelligence, specialist at setpieces and heading. Needless to say he was the skipper of his side. For some reason Offenbach was a club that had no good standing in the German FA which might ultimately be the reason why Offenbach's best player never played for the national team. Shame, because Nuber would have really deserved it like few others that never got a cap.

League record

1955-56	16	7	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 1 – South)
1956-57	24	11	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 1 – South)
1957-58	18	6	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 1 – South)
1958-59	30	22	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	30	23	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	30	15	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	26	6	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	29	12	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	35	15	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1964-65	38	18	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1965-66	34	11	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1966-67	31	10	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1967-68	34	3	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1968-69	34	5	Kickers Offenbach (BL)
1969-70	0	0	retired
1970-71	2	0	Kickers Offenbach (BL)



Jens JEREMIES (b. 1974)

55 A (1 goal), Germany, Defensive Midfielder

League champion 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006

League runner-up 2004

Cup winner 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006

Cup finalist 1999

Champions Cup 2001

Champions Cup finalist 1999

Intercontinental Cup 2001

World Cup finalist 2002

In German football of the 1990s the defensive midfielder had become one of the most important positions but the job profile still differed a lot from that of a modern defensive midfielder. In most cases the definition was that he was a sweeper in front of the defenders, not behind them. The fashionable word used to describe his job was 'vacuum cleaner'. It was players like Steffen Freund and Jens Jeremies that embodied these kind of players: win-at-all-costs mentality, being all over the place, hard-running, hard-tackling. Great vision or football intelligence, which is so important for a modern defensive midfielder, was not particularly necessary. A combative spirit and mental prowess were more cherished than technical and passing skills. Mentally, Jens Jeremies resembled the great 'maniac' Matthias Sammer, but he was not quite as extrovert. At his peak, Jeremies was a super reliable defensive player who very rarely was caught off-guard or making mistakes. His strengths were typical for his time and his role: very dynamic, pace, cleverness, good overview, ambitious, dogged. Jens Jeremies also had the streetwise instincts of a typical street footballer that learned his trade playing in the neighbourhood. If need be, Jeremies would also deputize Lothar Matthäus as sweeper, a player he resembled physically. Aside from a lack of really good ball skills, Jens Jeremies' other weak spots were his lack of being dangerous offensively and his offensive passing skills were somewhat underdeveloped.

League record

1994-95	10	1	Dresden (BL)
1995-96	29	0	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1996-97	27	2	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1997-98	22	0	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1998-99	30	1	Bayern München (BL)
1999-00	30	3	Bayern München (BL)
2000-01	21	1	Bayern München (BL)
2001-02	10	0	Bayern München (BL)
2002-03	29	0	Bayern München (BL)
2003-04	23	1	Bayern München (BL)
2004-05	7	0	Bayern München (BL)
2005-06	13	0	Bayern München (BL)



Ioan LUPESCU (b. 1968)

74 A (6 goals), Romania, Midfielder/Libero

League champion 1990, 2000, 2002

League runner-up 1987, 1988, 1989, 1999, 2001

Cup winner 1990, 1993, 2000, 2001

Cup finalist 1987, 1988, 1989, 2002

A technically very strong defensive utility player who mostly played in central midfield but could also be deployed as a libero or man-marker. An elegant player who could solve defensive situations without having to tackle. Hard-running and good at heading.

League record

1986-87	9	0	Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)
1987-88	30	4	Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)
1988-89	30	3	Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)
1989-90	29	4	Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)
1990-91	29	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1991-92	34	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1992-93	31	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1993-94	32	0	Leverkusen (BL)
1994-95	27	0	Leverkusen (BL)
1995-96	30	0	Leverkusen (BL)
1996-97	23	5	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1997-98	21	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1998-99	32	8	Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)
1999-00	29	6	Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)
2000-01	9	2	Bursapor (Turkey)
2000-01	17	0	Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)
2001-02	7	0	Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)
2001-02	5	1	Al-Hilal (Saudi Arabia)

#42



Karl TEWES (1886-1968)
6 A, Germany, Centre-Half (pyramid)
League runner-up 1926, 1927

A commanding centre-half who spread fear among his opponents due to his energetic and rustic playing style. Because of his commanding and dominant ways he was nicknamed "Kaiser Karl". One of Germany's finest centre-halves of the time, Karl Tewes was a true folk hero among football enthusiasts in Germany. Due to World War 1 his debut in the national team came only at the age of 34 in 1920. Despite his age he was considered the very best centre-half in Germany in the first few years after World War 1.

Senior clubs

1913-14 Norden Nordwest
1914-23 Viktoria Berlin
1923-27 Hertha BSC

#41



Đorđe PAVLIĆ (1938-2015)

2 A, Yugoslavia, Centre Forward/Defensive Midfielder/Stopper

League champion 1966

League runner-up 1962

In Yugoslavia Pavlic was successful as a two-footed centre forward who despite his small height was a dangerous header of the ball. When he joined Duisburg in 1966 he was retrained as a defensive player, often he was deployed as a marker of either the opposing playmaker or of the goalgetter. Players he was set out to mark were illustrious names such as Uli Hoeness, Günter Netzer and Wolfgang Overath. At that job he proved to be probably the most technical and skilled player of all "midfield markers" that populated to pitches of German football during the 1970s.

League record

1960-61	8	3	Vojvodina Novi Sad (Yugoslavia)
1961-62	19	11	Vojvodina Novi Sad (Yugoslavia)
1962-63	23	16	Vojvodina Novi Sad (Yugoslavia)
1963-64	18	7	Vojvodina Novi Sad (Yugoslavia)
1964-65	23	3	Vojvodina Novi Sad (Yugoslavia)
1965-66	18	8	Vojvodina Novi Sad (Yugoslavia)
1966-67	26	2	Duisburg (BL)
1967-68	30	7	Duisburg (BL)
1968-69	29	4	Duisburg (BL)
1969-70	28	3	Duisburg (BL)
1970-71	30	3	Duisburg (BL)
1971-72	30	2	Duisburg (BL)
1972-73	17	4	SW Essen (Div. 2)
1973-74	2	0	SW Essen (Div. 2)



Walter SCHMIDT (b. 1937)
 Germany, Half Back/Defensive Midfielder
 League champion 1967

A universal athlete who did very well in track-and-field and gymnastics before he became one of the outstanding defensive midfielders of the 1960s Bundesliga. A demolished meniscus ended his career in 1969. Walter Schmidt was a very determined player and one of the most reliable and highly performing defensive players throughout the 1960s.

League record

1959-60	27	4	Eintracht Braunschweig (Div. 1 – North)
1960-61	30	3	Eintracht Braunschweig (Div. 1 – North)
1961-62	30	0	Eintracht Braunschweig (Div. 1 – North)
1962-63	29	1	Eintracht Braunschweig (Div. 1 – North)
1963-64	30	2	Eintracht Braunschweig (BL)
1964-65	30	0	Eintracht Braunschweig (BL)
1965-66	34	1	Eintracht Braunschweig (BL)
1966-67	33	0	Eintracht Braunschweig (BL)
1967-68	31	3	Eintracht Braunschweig (BL)
1968-69	25	1	Eintracht Braunschweig (BL)



Ciriaco SFORZA (b. 1970)

79 A (7 goals), Switzerland, Central Midfielder/Libero

League champion 1991, 1998, 2001

League runner-up 1987, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1996

Cup winner 1988, 1989

Cup finalist 1993

Champions Cup 2001

UEFA Cup 1996

UEFA Cup finalist 1997

Intercontinental Cup 2001

Swiss Footballer 1993

The Swissman was a player that possessed a natural authority on the pitch, never was in need of gesticulating much. His sign language and directives were reserved but always spot on. Otto Rehhagel called him "my quarterback", signalling that Ciriaco Sforza was the lynchpin in his late-1990s Kaiserslautern team. Sforza began as an offensive midfielder but he proved to be most valuable in the role of a cross between a sweeper and a defensive midfielder. A high football intellect coupled with excellent skill on the ball made Sforza one of the best defensive midfielders around the turn of the millennium. Sforza was a strategist of high calibre, someone who could read a game and give it structure. A great personality who was conferred with by his managers in terms of tactical concepts.

League record

1986-87	21	1	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1987-88	29	3	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1988-89	16	1	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1989-90	22	3	Aarau (Switzerland)
1990-91	28	1	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1991-92	26	4	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1992-93	21	2	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1993-94	29	8	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1994-95	32	7	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1995-96	30	2	Bayern München (BL)
1996-97	26	1	Inter (Italy)
1997-98	32	3	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1998-99	32	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1999-00	27	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
2000-01	20	0	Bayern München (BL)
2001-02	15	1	Bayern München (BL)
2002-03	23	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
2003-04	0	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
2004-05	17	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
2005-06	7	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)



Georg (Schorch) KÖHLER (1900-1972)
5 A, Germany, Centre-Half (pyramid)

An excellent passer and reader of the game, the aerially strong Schorch Köhler was a primarily offensive-thinking centre-half and as such a true "regal ruler of the midfield" (as Helmut Schön put it). His fairness was impressive and he had the reputation of gentleman on the pitch. 'Kicker' noted: "His calm, sober and unflashy way of conducting the play has yielded him many sympathies." Unfortunately for Köhler during the mid-1920s, his best years, Hans Kalb and Ludwig Leinberger, two southern Germans, were regarded higher because they both played for far more successful clubs (Nürnberg and Fürth). While he joined VfB Dresden as a player in 1935, at the same time he acted as manager for SC Dresden and was as such responsible for his former club's most successful phase around 1940, winning two championships and two cups as SC Dresden's manager.

Senior clubs

1918-35 SC Dresden
1935-41 VfB Dresden

#37



Jürgen (Joschi) GROH (b. 1956)
2 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder/Left Back
League Champion 1982, 1983
League runner-up 1981, 1984
Champions Cup 1983
UEFA Cup finalist 1982

A lightfooted defensive midfielder and full back who mainly lived on his stamina, but still had a solid technique for a player of his position and good passing skills. Joined Hamburg in 1980 and immediately became vital in Ernst Happel's tactical plans. Groh was used as a retainer in front of the defense during his time in Hamburg but also as a marker. When playing in midfield, Groh was an important assistant to playmaker Felix Magath.

League record

1976-77	23	1	Kaserslautern (BL)
1977-78	32	0	Kaserslautern (BL)
1978-79	28	1	Kaserslautern (BL)
1979-80	33	1	Kaserslautern (BL)
1980-81	34	1	Hamburg (BL)
1981-82	32	0	Hamburg (BL)
1982-83	31	0	Hamburg (BL)
1983-84	33	3	Hamburg (BL)
1984-85	24	0	Hamburg (BL)
1985-86	17	1	Trabzonspor (Turkey)
1986-87	28	0	Kaserslautern (BL)
1987-88	32	0	Kaserslautern (BL)
1988-89	21	0	Kaserslautern (BL)



Bernhard (Bernd) CULLMANN (b. 1949)
40 A (6 goals), Germany, Midfielder/Libero
League champion 1978
League runner-up 1973, 1982
Cup winner 1977, 1978, 1983
Cup finalist 1971, 1973, 1980
World Cup winner 1974
Euro winner 1980

In his 13 years playing for Köln he is most remembered for being a ‘classic’ attacking libero, albeit not so much in the Beckenbauer sense but more in the sense of a tall, commanding centre-half with good ball skills and a dangerous presence at set-pieces. He was also frequently used as a defensive midfielder and sometimes as a stopper. Together with Wolfgang Overath, Heinz Flohe, Dieter Müller and Wolfgang Weber, Bernd Cullmann was one of the defining figures of the fine Köln side of the 1970s.

League record

1970-71	19	1	Köln (BL)
1971-72	23	1	Köln (BL)
1972-73	34	6	Köln (BL)
1973-74	34	1	Köln (BL)
1974-75	32	4	Köln (BL)
1975-76	26	1	Köln (BL)
1976-77	12	0	Köln (BL)
1977-78	27	6	Köln (BL)
1978-79	31	4	Köln (BL)
1979-80	33	2	Köln (BL)
1980-81	29	1	Köln (BL)
1981-82	32	2	Köln (BL)
1982-83	9	0	Köln (BL)



Karl (Charly) MAI (1928-1993)
21 A (1 goal), Germany, Half Back
World Cup winner 1954

Karl Mai was drafted by the German Army at the age of 16 in 1944 and was released from war captivity in 1946. Mai debuted in the first team of Fürth in 1950 as a forward. In 1952 he was withdrawn to a half back position. He played very convincing as a left half and debuted for Germany in 1953. His best international game was the 1954 World Cup final when he neutralized Sandor Kocsis. He was known as a destroyer who due to his excellent physical shape was able to fight for 90 minutes. Mai had a good technique but his main feature was his determination.

League record

1948-49	10	3	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 2)
1949-50	1	0	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 - South)
1950-51	10	2	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 - South)
1951-52	24	2	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 - South)
1952-53	29	4	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 - South)
1953-54	30	4	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 - South)
1954-55	15	0	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 - South)
1955-56	24	2	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 - South)
1956-57	30	2	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 - South)
1957-58	19	1	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1958-59	26	0	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	28	1	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	13	1	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	15	0	Young Fellows Zürich (Switzerland – Div. 2)
1962-64	-	-	Dornbirn (Austria – Div. 2)



William (Jimmy) HARTWIG (b. 1954)
 2 A, Germany, Right Back/Defensive Midfielder
 League champion 1979, 1982, 1983
 League runner-up 1980, 1981, 1984
 Champions Cup 1983
 Champions Cup finalist 1980
 UEFA Cup finalist 1982

Son of an American soldier and a German woman, he started out as an offensive right back with a great urge towards the goal, then settled as a defensive midfielder by the late-1970s. William 'Jimmy' Hartwig was a great fighter who loved the physical aspects of the game more than the finesse. That being said, he had a good control of the ball, and his aerial ability made him always a threat in front of the opposing goal. After his retirement he survived cancer in the mid-1990s and then became an accomplished part-time stage actor. He was always an outspoken player and made headlines ahead of the 1982 World Cup when he stated that he "was probably not blond enough to play in the national team" after Jupp Derwall did not include him in 1982 World Cup squad.

League record

1973-74	29	8	Osnabrück (Div. 2)
1974-75	16	1	TSV 1860 München (Div. 2)
1975-76	33	10	TSV 1860 München (Div. 2)
1976-77	38	9	TSV 1860 München (Div. 2)
1977-78	34	6	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1978-79	34	10	Hamburg (BL)
1979-80	29	9	Hamburg (BL)
1980-81	27	7	Hamburg (BL)
1981-82	31	14	Hamburg (BL)
1982-83	31	6	Hamburg (BL)
1983-84	30	6	Hamburg (BL)
1984-85	20	5	Köln (BL)
1985-86	4	0	Köln (BL)
1986-87	2	0	Homburg (BL)
1987-88	2	0	Homburg (BL)



Javier (Javi) MARTINEZ Aginaga (b. 1988)
 18 A, Spain, Defensive Midfielder/Centre-Back
 League champion 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
 Cup winner 2013, 2014, 2016
 Cup finalist 2009, 2012
 Champions Cup 2013
 Intercontinental Cup 2013
 World Cup winner 2010
 Euro winner 2012

Good anticipation, solid technique, strong in the air and excellent in defensive duels. Very valuable as a destroyer and interceptor in central defensive midfield. He formed a brilliant central midfield partnership with Bastian Schweinsteiger in Bayern's 2012-13 "treble" campaign. Since he joined Bayern in 2012 Javi Martinez has repeatedly been thrown back by injuries and under Pep Guardiola he mostly played as a centre back (when he was fit).

League Record

2005-06	32	3	Osasuna (Spain – Div. 2)
2006-07	35	3	Athletic Bilbao (Spain)
2007-08	34	1	Athletic Bilbao (Spain)
2008-09	32	5	Athletic Bilbao (Spain)
2009-10	34	6	Athletic Bilbao (Spain)
2010-11	35	4	Athletic Bilbao (Spain)
2011-12	31	4	Athletic Bilbao (Spain)
2012-13	27	3	Bayern München (BL)
2013-14	18	0	Bayern München (BL)
2014-15	1	0	Bayern München (BL)
2015-16	16	1	Bayern München (BL)
2016-17	25	1	Bayern München (BL)



Miroslav (Mirko) VOTAVA (b. 1956)
5 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder
League champion 1988, 1993
League runner-up 1985, 1986, 1995
Cup winner 1985, 1991, 1994
Cup finalist 1989, 1990
CWC winner 1992
Euro winner 1980

One of the longest-serving professionals with 20 consecutive seasons in topflight (17 in the Bundesliga, three in Spain's Primera Division). His great consistency as a professional is documented by the fact that he played at least 30 games in 18 of these 20 seasons (only in his first 1976-77 and his last 1995-96 did he play less than 30 games). He started out as a central offensive midfielder but not in the mould of a playmaker but like an offensive ball winner, very straightforward in his actions and someone who covered a lot of ground with his stamina. The longer his career lasted, the more defensive he became in his approach. Not a hugely creative player more someone who was important for the structure of his team's actions.

League record

1973-74	7	0	Dortmund (Div. 2)
1974-75	37	3	Dortmund (Div. 2)
1975-76	31	0	Dortmund (Div. 2)
1976-77	22	3	Dortmund (BL)
1977-78	33	2	Dortmund (BL)
1978-79	34	5	Dortmund (BL)
1979-80	33	4	Dortmund (BL)
1980-81	33	8	Dortmund (BL)
1981-82	34	3	Dortmund (BL)
1982-83	31	4	Atletico Madrid (Spain)
1983-84	33	4	Atletico Madrid (Spain)
1984-85	32	1	Atletico Madrid (Spain)
1985-86	32	1	Bremen (BL)
1986-87	34	3	Bremen (BL)
1985-86	32	1	Bremen (BL)
1987-88	32	2	Bremen (BL)
1988-89	33	1	Bremen (BL)
1989-90	30	3	Bremen (BL)
1990-91	31	2	Bremen (BL)
1991-92	32	0	Bremen (BL)
1992-93	33	3	Bremen (BL)
1993-94	33	1	Bremen (BL)
1994-95	33	1	Bremen (BL)
1995-96	28	0	Bremen (BL)
1996-97	6	1	Bremen (BL)
1996-97	15	0	Oldenburg (Div. 2)

#31



Franz (Bulle) ROTH (b. 1946)

4 A, Germany, Outside Right/Defensive Midfielder

League champion 1969, 1972, 1973, 1974

League runner-up 1970, 1971

Cup winner 1967, 1969, 1971

Champions Cup 1974, 1975, 1976

CWC winner 1967

Intercontinental Cup 1976

An underestimated player who started out as a right winger but then evolved into a cross between an offensive and defensive midfielder. Franz 'Bull' Roth was an extremely physical player, a brawny type who would be seen covering a lot of ground during a game, a great fighter and tackler who would man-mark the opponent's playmaker but who could also wreak havoc in the opposing box with his very hard right-footed shot. Unlucky for him he played during a time when the finesse technical player was en vogue while players of his type were not valued that much. On the pitch Roth was a very dynamic workaholic hungry for success.

League record

1966-67	20	7	Bayern München (BL)
1967-68	32	5	Bayern München (BL)
1968-69	34	2	Bayern München (BL)
1969-70	31	10	Bayern München (BL)
1970-71	27	11	Bayern München (BL)
1971-72	32	12	Bayern München (BL)
1972-73	32	5	Bayern München (BL)
1973-74	33	8	Bayern München (BL)
1974-75	24	4	Bayern München (BL)
1975-76	27	6	Bayern München (BL)
1976-77	20	1	Bayern München (BL)
1977-78	10	1	Bayern München (BL)
1978-79	31	1	Salzburg (Austria)

#30



Dietmar (Didi) HAMANN (b. 1973)
59 A (5 goals), Germany, Defensive Midfielder
League Champion 1994, 1997
League runner-up 1996, 1998, 2002
Cup winner 1998, 2001, 2006
Cup finalist 1999
Champions Cup 2005
UEFA Cup 1996, 2001

Always a key player in his teams, Didi Hamann controlled the developments in midfield via his overview, understanding of the game and football intelligence. Coupled with his consistency this made him one of the best German defensive midfielders of his era.

League record

1993-94	5	1	Bayern München (BL)
1994-95	30	0	Bayern München (BL)
1995-96	20	2	Bayern München (BL)
1996-97	23	1	Bayern München (BL)
1997-98	28	2	Bayern München (BL)
1998-99	23	4	Newcastle (England)
1999-00	28	1	Liverpool (England)
2000-01	30	2	Liverpool (England)
2001-02	31	1	Liverpool (England)
2002-03	30	2	Liverpool (England)
2003-04	25	2	Liverpool (England)
2004-05	30	0	Liverpool (England)
2005-06	17	0	Liverpool (England)
2006-07	16	0	Manchester City (England)
2007-08	29	0	Manchester City (England)
2008-09	9	0	Manchester City (England)



Wolfgang ROLFF (b. 1959)
 37 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder/Sweeper
 League champion 1983
 League runner-up 1984
 Champions Cup 1983
 UEFA Cup 1988
 World Cup finalist 1986

A tenacious central defensive midfielder who was a very valuable but unspectacular player. Rolff impressed with his workrate and hard-running with a lot of bite and a combative mentality. But he could also exert offensive pressure and was useful in building up from a deep midfield position.

League record

1979-80	35	6	Bremerhaven (Div. 2)
1980-81	40	6	Fortuna Köln (Div. 2)
1981-82	35	9	Fortuna Köln (Div. 2)
1982-83	32	4	Hamburg (BL)
1983-84	32	11	Hamburg (BL)
1984-85	32	4	Hamburg (BL)
1985-86	33	5	Hamburg (BL)
1986-87	34	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1987-88	34	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1988-89	31	5	Leverkusen (BL)
1989-90	30	4	Strasbourg (France)
1990-91	20	0	Uerdingen (BL)
1991-92	37	5	Karlsruhe (BL)
1992-93	33	8	Karlsruhe (BL)
1993-94	24	1	Karlsruhe (BL)
1994-95	14	0	Köln (BL)
1995-96	16	2	Fortuna Köln (Div. 2)



Georg (Schorsch) KNÖPFLE (1904-1987)

23 A, Germany, Half Back

League champion 1928

Optionally used as either left or right half, Schorsch Knöpfle was a gung-ho defensive enforcer, as 'Fussball' said "the prototype of the undaunted and relentless fighter". He established himself quickly as a regular in the national team. In 1939, 'Kicker' wrote: "While there may have been technically better half backs and of greater vision, nobody compared to him in terms of self-sacrifice. Georg Knöpfle was energy incarnate."

League record (incomplete)

1926-27	11	0	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – Bavaria)
1927-28	27	1	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – North Bavaria)
1928-33	-	-	FSV Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main)
1933-34	-	-	FSV Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Southwest)



Norbert NACHTWEIH (b. 1957)

Germany, Full Back/Libero/Midfielder

League champion 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989

League runner-up 1988

Cup winner 1981, 1984, 1986

Cup finalist 1985

UEFA Cup 1980

Champions Cup finalist 1987

Nachtweih was a technically superb player who was good playing in a number of different positions, left back, right back, wide midfielder, central midfielder, libero, winger and inside forward. Of reserved nature, he did have the prerequisite to settle as central offensive midfielder with his good short passing, ball control and strategic qualities, but in the end his versatility meant that he was more useful as a utility player. Nachtweih complied, tactically disciplined he would also impress with his eagerness to solve the task he was given. Hard-running but also lightfooted, Nachtweih had a good eye for passing, a feeling for the rhythm of a game, a good shooting technique and was good at set-pieces but he didn't exhaust his capabilities. He most certainly would have been an international for West Germany during the 1980s but during his time in East Germany Nachtweih had already played in youth competitions and was thus ruled out of playing for another FA.

League record

1974-75	3	0	Halle (East Germany)
1975-76	22	0	Halle (East Germany)
1976-77	10	2	Halle (East Germany)
1977-78	5	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1978-79	22	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1979-80	32	7	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1980-81	30	7	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1981-82	31	11	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1982-83	28	1	Bayern München (BL)
1983-84	30	4	Bayern München (BL)
1984-85	25	3	Bayern München (BL)
1985-86	27	4	Bayern München (BL)
1986-87	33	3	Bayern München (BL)
1987-88	30	2	Bayern München (BL)
1988-89	29	3	Bayern München (BL)
1989-90	34	1	Cannes (France)
1990-91	9	1	Cannes (France)
1991-92	3	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1991-92	12	1	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1992-93	41	7	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1993-94	35	2	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1994-95	30	1	Mannheim (Div. 2)
1995-96	9	0	Mannheim (Div. 2)



Stefan (Steff) REISCH (b. 1941)

9 A, Germany, Half Back

League champion 1961, 1971, 1972

League runner-up 1962, 1970

Cup winner 1962, 1970

Cup finalist 1972

Stefan Reisch was a left half with excellent ball control and an inexhaustible variety of tricks in his bag. He became a starter for Nürnberg in 1960 aged 19. Known for his precise passing and long dribbling spells, Reisch soon became a fan favourite in Nürnberg. After his international debut in 1962 he remained a starter for Germany for most of the following two years. Possibly because Reisch's love affair with the ball was something new Germany manager Helmut Schön did not like too much, his international career soon was over after Schön was appointed successor of Sepp Herberger in 1964. Reisch was an individualist who often had quarrels with his managers, most notably with Max Merkel in 1967.

League record

1960-61	25	0	Nürnberg (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	27	4	Nürnberg (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	29	4	Nürnberg (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	27	1	Nürnberg (BL)
1964-65	22	4	Nürnberg (BL)
1965-66	20	4	Nürnberg (BL)
1966-67	17	0	Nürnberg (BL)
1967-68	-	-	Xamax (Switzerland – Div. 2)
1968-69	22	2	Club Brugge (Belgium)
1969-70	1	0	Club Brugge (Belgium)
1970-71	20	3	Basel (Switzerland)
1971-72	20	3	Basel (Switzerland)
1972-73	-	-	Würzburg (Div. 2)



Michael (Susi) ZORC (b. 1962)
 7 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder/Sweeper
 League champion 1995, 1996
 League runner-up 1992
 Cup winner 1989
 Champions Cup 1997
 Intercontinental Cup 1997
 UEFA Cup finalist 1993

Right at the start of his senior career people expected Michael Zorc to become an international, while he did become one, it took him over 10 years to do so and his international career was over again rather soon. For Dortmund, Zorc was one of the most crucial players over 17 seasons. In the first part of his career he was a central midfielder with a knack for scoring many goals but by the end he was a clear-cut defensive midfielder who kept up his level of goalscoring by becoming one of the most successful penalty takers. A retriever and very enduring workhorse and very dangerous with his heading. Strategically refined, Zorc was always the one man who would cover the most ground during a game and who hardly suffered a loss of form. He also played convincingly as a sweeper in the 1990s.

League record

1981-82	9	0	Dortmund (BL)
1982-83	24	2	Dortmund (BL)
1983-84	30	5	Dortmund (BL)
1984-85	30	8	Dortmund (BL)
1985-86	34	10	Dortmund (BL)
1986-87	32	14	Dortmund (BL)
1987-88	23	13	Dortmund (BL)
1988-89	27	3	Dortmund (BL)
1989-90	32	10	Dortmund (BL)
1990-91	30	5	Dortmund (BL)
1991-92	19	6	Dortmund (BL)
1992-93	29	10	Dortmund (BL)
1993-94	29	7	Dortmund (BL)
1994-95	33	15	Dortmund (BL)
1995-96	30	15	Dortmund (BL)
1996-97	30	7	Dortmund (BL)
1997-98	22	1	Dortmund (BL)



Torsten FRINGS (b. 1976)

79 A (10 goals), Germany, Defensive Midfielder/Full Back

League champion 2005

League runner-up 2006, 2008

Cup winner 1999, 2005

Cup finalist 2000, 2019

UEFA Cup finalist 2009

Euro finalist 2008

A fighter and interceptor of solid class who was also useful as a full back but his favorite position was that of defensive midfielder. In his club Bremen he often had to play the right-sided part of the diamond-shaped midfield. It is this versatility that made Frings one of the most valuable players of the 2000s in Germany. As a primarily defensive midfielder Frings made the most out of his talents: he knew how to read a game, knew where he had to intercept, could play the simple but effective pass. A defensive chief and organiser who blossomed when he could roll up his sleeves and do the dirty work. A similar player in style to the Italian Gattuso, relying a lot on his football instincts: recognizing possible developments intuitively, anticipating and responding by doing the right thing intuitively.

League record

1994-95	6	0	Aachen (Div. 3)
1995-96	32	12	Aachen (Div. 3)
1996-97	19	1	Aachen (Div. 3)
1996-97	15	0	Bremen (BL)
1997-98	28	2	Bremen (BL)
1998-99	23	3	Bremen (BL)
1999-00	33	3	Bremen (BL)
2000-01	30	1	Bremen (BL)
2001-02	33	6	Bremen (BL)
2002-03	31	6	Dortmund (BL)
2003-04	16	4	Dortmund (BL)
2004-05	29	3	Bayern München (BL)
2005-06	28	3	Bremen (BL)
2006-07	33	1	Bremen (BL)
2007-08	11	1	Bremen (BL)
2008-09	30	4	Bremen (BL)
2009-10	30	6	Bremen (BL)
2010-11	32	6	Bremen (BL)
2010-11	13	0	Toronto (Canada)
2011-12	20	2	Toronto (Canada)



Mark VAN BOMMEL (b. 1977)

79 A (10 goals), Netherlands, Central Midfielder

League champion 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011

League runner-up 2002, 2004, 2009, 2012, 2013

Cup winner 2005, 2008, 2010

Cup finalist 1999, 2013

Champions Cup 2006

Champions Cup finalist 2010

World Cup finalist 2010

Mark van Bommel was a professional who polarized like few others. An edgy player with a mind of his own, a fantastic teamplayer and leader who sometimes overshot the mark with a tendency to sometimes apply unfair means. This must not overshadow that van Bommel was an excellent central midfielder during his prime. Mark van Bommel was not only a powerful defensive enforcer but an intelligent strategist with solid ball control and passing skills. He was also able to act as a playmaker from a deep midfield position during his peak years.

League record

1992-93	1	0	Sittard (Netherlands)
1993-94	13	0	Sittard (Netherlands – Div. 2)
1994-95	31	7	Sittard (Netherlands – Div. 2)
1995-96	27	0	Sittard (Netherlands)
1996-97	19	0	Sittard (Netherlands)
1997-98	31	1	Sittard (Netherlands)
1998-99	31	5	Sittard (Netherlands)
1999-00	33	6	Eindhoven (Netherlands)
2000-01	32	7	Eindhoven (Netherlands)
2001-02	23	4	Eindhoven (Netherlands)
2002-03	28	9	Eindhoven (Netherlands)
2003-04	23	6	Eindhoven (Netherlands)
2004-05	30	14	Eindhoven (Netherlands)
2005-06	24	2	Barcelona (Spain)
2006-07	29	6	Bayern München (BL)
2007-08	27	2	Bayern München (BL)
2008-09	29	2	Bayern München (BL)
2009-10	25	1	Bayern München (BL)
2010-11	13	0	Bayern München (BL)
2010-11	14	0	AC Milan (Italy)
2011-12	25	0	AC Milan (Italy)
2012-13	28	6	Eindhoven (Netherlands)



Morten OLSEN (b. 1949)

102 A (4 goals), Denmark, Defensive Midfielder/Libero/Full Back

League champion 1981, 1985, 1986

League runner-up 1982, 1983, 1984, 1989

Danish Footballer 1983, 1986

Dubbed the “Danish Beckenbauer”, Morten Olsen was a sublime libero and defensive midfielder, a very calm presence on the pitch and an initiator of intelligent build up. One of the greatest personalities in European football of the 1970s and 80s, Olsen debuted in the Bundesliga at the age of 37 in 1986, his influence on Köln’s young manager Christoph Daum in applying modern tactics like pressing cannot be overestimated. Yet Daum only took to the pressing idea, Olsen’s urging to play with a flat back four in a complete zonal system was something Daum did not relent to.

League record

1970-72	-	-	Nykøbing
1972-73	30	1	Cercle Brugge (Belgium)
1973-74	30	4	Cercle Brugge (Belgium)
1974-75	36	0	Cercle Brugge (Belgium)
1975-76	36	3	Cercle Brugge (Belgium)
1976-77	34	1	RWD Molenbeek (Belgium)
1977-78	34	0	RWD Molenbeek (Belgium)
1978-79	33	0	RWD Molenbeek (Belgium)
1979-80	5	3	RWD Molenbeek (Belgium)
1980-81	34	0	RSC Anderlecht (Belgium)
1981-82	12	1	RSC Anderlecht (Belgium)
1982-83	29	1	RSC Anderlecht (Belgium)
1983-84	31	0	RSC Anderlecht (Belgium)
1984-85	33	0	RSC Anderlecht (Belgium)
1985-86	34	0	RSC Anderlecht (Belgium)
1986-87	34	0	Köln (BL)
1987-88	30	1	Köln (BL)
1988-89	16	1	Köln (BL)

#21



Dieter EILTS (b. 1964)

31 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder

League champion 1988, 1993

League runner-up 1995

Cup winner 1991, 1994, 1999

Cup finalist 1989, 1990, 2000

The prototype of the 1990s defensive midfielder, Dieter Eilts impressed with his hard-running and ball winning qualities but also was able to engage in buildup play due to his solid passing skills. Modest by nature, Eilts always committed himself to the team, never looking for a place in the limelight, going on about things in a calm and sober way, he was a regular starter for Bremen for 12 consecutive seasons.

League record

1986-87	1	0	Bremen (BL)
1987-88	2	0	Bremen (BL)
1988-89	13	0	Bremen (BL)
1989-90	31	1	Bremen (BL)
1990-91	32	0	Bremen (BL)
1991-92	37	1	Bremen (BL)
1992-93	24	1	Bremen (BL)
1993-94	26	1	Bremen (BL)
1994-95	34	1	Bremen (BL)
1995-96	32	0	Bremen (BL)
1996-97	30	0	Bremen (BL)
1997-98	33	1	Bremen (BL)
1998-99	32	0	Bremen (BL)
1999-00	29	1	Bremen (BL)
2000-01	30	0	Bremen (BL)
2001-02	4	0	Bremen (BL)



Sören LERBY (b. 1958)

67 A (10 goals), Denmark, Midfielder

League champion 1977, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990

League runner-up 1978, 1981

Cup winner 1979, 1983, 1984, 1986

Cup finalist 1978, 1980, 1981, 1985

Champions Cup 1988

Intercontinental Cup 1988

Top Scorer Champions Cup 1980

One of the most successful players in European club football. In 16 professional seasons Lerby won 18 domestic trophies: nine Championships, seven Cups and two international titles. Still well remembered is 13 November 1985 when Lerby played in two competitive games for two different teams on the same day. In the afternoon he played a World Cup qualifier for Denmark in Dublin (Denmark needed one point to qualify). After he got subbed out he was immediately (without showering) brought to the airport where he set onboard a plain to get to Düsseldorf. There, Bayern managing director Uli Hoeness waited for him with his Porsche and then drove him to nearby Bochum. At least, that was the intention. But a traffic jam meant that Lerby would've missed the Cup game of Bayern vs. VfL Bochum at the evening. Lerby refused to accept that the effort was in vain, thus jumped out of the car and ran the missing two kilometers by foot. Lerby was then subbed in after 46 minutes, the hard-fought game ended in a 1-1 draw. This anecdote highlights Lerby's two greatest strengths: total commitment and great stamina in doing so. Lerby was a highly intelligent defensive midfielder, far more of a playmaker than a destroyer, always at the center of things but not like Netzer or other classic playmakers, Lerby was more a hard-working finesse player, very adept at spraying long diagonal balls or surging through midfield covering a lot of ground. He was also very dangerous from distance because of his razor-sharp left-footed shots. Due to his dominant and competitive nature, Lerby was able to change the course of a game.

League record

1974-75	13	3	Fremad (Denmark)
1975-76	8	3	Ajax (Netherlands)
1976-77	16	3	Ajax (Netherlands)
1977-78	22	3	Ajax (Netherlands)
1978-79	33	16	Ajax (Netherlands)
1979-80	30	10	Ajax (Netherlands)
1980-81	33	10	Ajax (Netherlands)
1981-82	39	9	Ajax (Netherlands)
1982-83	34	12	Ajax (Netherlands)
1983-84	30	3	Bayern München (BL)
1984-85	28	11	Bayern München (BL)
1985-86	31	8	Bayern München (BL)
1986-87	27	3	Monaco (France)
1987-88	30	9	Eindhoven (Netherlands)
1988-89	22	1	Eindhoven (Netherlands)
1989-90	29	6	Eindhoven (Netherlands)



Ferreira da Rosa EMERSON (b. 1976)
 73 A (6 goals), Brazil, Central Midfielder
 League champion 1996, 2001, 2007
 League runner-up 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004
 Cup winner 1997, 2010
 Cup finalist 1995, 1996, 2003
 Copa Libertadores 1995
 Intercontinental Cup 2007
 World Cup finalist 1998
 Copa America 1999

The Brazilian was also a very good offensive midfielder but during his time in Germany playing for Leverkusen he proved to be most valuable in a slightly withdrawn central midfield position. It was in this position that he unfolded his qualities the best. Technically virtually perfect, elegant in possession, exuding a degree of ingeniousness in terms of being able to read a game, to anticipate moves. Added to that he was also physically robust enough for the defensive part of the game and strong in one-on-one duels.

League record

1994-95	18	2	Gremio (Brazil)
1995-96	11	1	Gremio (Brazil)
1996-97	25	5	Gremio (Brazil)
1997-98	0	0	Gremio (Brazil)
1997-98	25	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1998-99	28	5	Leverku
2000-01	13	3	Roma (Italy)
2001-02	28	5	Roma (Italy)
2002-03	31	2	Roma (Italy)
2003-04	33	3	Roma (Italy)
2004-05	33	2	Juventus (Italy)
2005-06	34	2	Juventus (Italy)
2006-07	28	1	Real Madrid (Spain)
2007-08	15	0	AC Milan (Italy)
2008-09	12	0	AC Milan (Italy)
2009-10	6	0	Santos (Brazil)



Zvonimir SOLDO (b. 1967)

61 A (3 goals), Croatia, Defensive Midfielder/Sweeper/Man-Marker

League champion 1996

League runner-up 1990, 1995, 2003

Cup winner 1992, 1996, 1997

Cup finalist 1995

CWC finalist 1998

Zvonimir Soldo was the Bundesliga's best defensive midfielder of the late-1990s and notable for his outstanding consistency in 10 seasons playing in Germany. Together with Bulgarian playmaker Krassimir Balakov he formed an incredibly skilled and forceful midfield tandem for VfB Stuttgart. Their manager, Joachim Löw, said of Soldo: "Almost inestimable is Soldo's value for the team. A one-of-a-kind team player." Soldo was incredibly powerful in one-on-one duels, heading and was a dangerous presence at setpieces. A highly intelligent organiser. For Croatia, Soldo also acted as sweeper or man-marker and he was one of the main players in Croatia's sensational 1998 World Cup campaign. By character, Soldo was a reserved man but full of drive and zest on the pitch. Stuttgart in the mid-/late-1990s made headlines with the "magic triangle" of Giovane Elber, Krassimir Balakov and Fredi Bobic. This triangle would not have been possible without Zvonimir Soldo as their life insurance.

League record

1988-90	36	0	Dinamo Zagreb (Yugoslavia)
1990-91	26	2	Zadar (Yugoslavia – Div. 2)
1991-96	55	2	Zapresic (Croatia)
1994-96	51	3	Croatia Zagreb (Croatia)
1996-97	27	3	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1997-98	29	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1998-99	29	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1999-00	31	2	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2000-01	28	2	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2001-02	33	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2002-03	28	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2003-04	33	4	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2004-05	32	2	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2005-06	31	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)

#17



Zeljko PERUŠIĆ (1936-2017)

27 A, Yugoslavia, Half Back/Defensive Midfielder

League champion 1966

League runner-up 1960, 1963, 1967

Cup winner 1960, 1963

Cup finalist 1964

Fairs Cup finalist 1963

Euro finalist 1960

Olympic Gold 1960

A physically very small player but one of the greatest defensive midfielders in Bundesliga history. Originally a winger in Yugoslavia, Perusic was a superbly technical player, a never-tiring instigator who covered a lot of ground and probably *the* key player in TSV 1860 München's 1966 championship winning campaign.

League record

1958-59	16	2	Dinamo Zagreb (Yugoslavia)
1959-60	21	4	Dinamo Zagreb (Yugoslavia)
1960-61	22	0	Dinamo Zagreb (Yugoslavia)
1961-62	21	0	Dinamo Zagreb (Yugoslavia)
1962-63	25	1	Dinamo Zagreb (Yugoslavia)
1963-64	20	2	Dinamo Zagreb (Yugoslavia)
1964-65	0	0	Dinamo Zagreb (Yugoslavia)
1965-66	34	0	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1966-67	32	0	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1967-68	34	1	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1968-69	21	0	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1969-70	17	0	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1970-71	-	-	St. Gallen (Switzerland – Div. 2)
1971-72	26	1	St. Gallen (Switzerland)
1972-73	26	0	St. Gallen (Switzerland)

#16



Arturo VIDAL (b. 1987)

98 A (23 goals), Chile, Central Midfielder

League champion 2006, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

Cup winner 2015, 2016

Cup finalist 2009

Champions Cup finalist 2015

Copa America 2015, 2016

Chilean Footballer 2016

Arturo Vidal is an impressive central midfielder that is tactically versatile, physically strong and technically refined. Never tiring in his ambition, Vidal can be a real difference maker when he is in top form, a real leader on the pitch. For his vigorous style of play he needs to be in top shape, though. Much of his impact is lost when he cannot draw from his full physical strength.

League record

2006-07	-	-	Colo Colo (Columbia)
2007-08	24	1	Leverkusen (BL)
2008-09	29	3	Leverkusen (BL)
2009-10	31	1	Leverkusen (BL)
2010-11	33	10	Leverkusen (BL)
2011-12	33	7	Juventus (Italy)
2012-13	31	10	Juventus (Italy)
2013-14	32	11	Juventus (Italy)
2014-15	28	7	Juventus (Italy)
2015-16	30	4	Bayern München (BL)
2016-17	27	4	Bayern München (BL)

#15



Franz-Josef (Jupp) TENHAGEN (b. 1952)
3 A, Germany, Defensive Midfielder/Sweeper
Cup finalist 1988

Throughout his professional career, Jupp Tenhagen switched between midfield, stopper and libero. Nicknamed 'the soul of VfL Bochum', he was briefly among the candidates to replace Franz Beckenbauer in 1977-78 as libero for Germany. But in the long run, it was unlikely for a player so associated with an always struggling 'grey mouse' club like Bochum to enjoy a respectable international career. A very valuable player in all positions he was used in, technically gifted, aplomb and charismatic, Tenhagen was part of the Bundesliga's inventory for 15 straight seasons. In 1981 Tenhagen was sold to Borussia Dortmund for 1 million marks, which saved Bochum from enforced relegation due to severe financial problems.

League record

1971-72	30	2	Bochum (BL)
1972-73	34	4	Bochum (BL)
1973-74	33	3	Bochum (BL)
1974-75	33	4	Bochum (BL)
1975-76	34	2	Bochum (BL)
1976-77	34	3	Bochum (BL)
1977-78	34	3	Bochum (BL)
1978-79	32	1	Bochum (BL)
1979-80	34	1	Bochum (BL)
1980-81	23	1	Bochum (BL)
1981-82	34	0	Dortmund (BL)
1982-83	31	0	Dortmund (BL)
1983-84	22	0	Dortmund (BL)
1984-85	24	1	Bochum (BL)
1985-86	24	0	Bochum (BL)
1986-87	-	-	retired
1987-88	1	0	Bochum (BL)

#14



Rudolf (Rudi) GRAMLICH (1908-1988)

22 A, Germany, Half Back

League runner-up 1932

The right half Rudi Gramlich was a technically sound defensive midfielder whose name was synonymous with his club Eintracht Frankfurt during the 1930s and 40s. The expert at low passes was also a regular in the national team and was considered Germany's best half back during much of the 1930s. Sports writer Kurt Fuhrmann stated the following in 1948: "His exquisite technique, his love for the game and his leaning to combine and thread passes in the tightest space were the merits of this inspired footballer." While he was naturally a member of the 1934 World Cup, he only played one game in Italy. The reason: he had to leave the party soon after the tournament started because his professional job in Frankfurt needed his attention. His international career was finished after the 1936 Olympics where he was one of the most critically slammed players.

League record

1929-30	19	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main/Hesse)
1930-31	23	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main/Hesse)
1931-32	33	2	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main/Hesse)
1932-33	32	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Main/Hesse)
1933-34	20	5	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Hesse)
1934-35	20	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Hesse)
1935-36	18	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Hesse)
1936-37	6	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Hesse)
1937-38	21	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Hesse)
1939-40	6	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Hesse)
1940-43	-	-	inactive
1943-44	2	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (Div. 1 – Hesse)

#13



Sami KHEDIRA (b. 1987)

71 A (7 goals), Germany, Central Midfielder

League champion 2007, 2012, 2016, 2017

League runner-up 2011, 2013, 2015

Cup winner 2011, 2014, 2016, 2017

Cup finalist 2007, 2013

Champions Cup 2014

Champions Cup finalist 2017

Intercontinental Cup 2014

World Cup winner 2014

Good technique, good eye, highly industrious with the heart of a fighter. A highly disciplined tactician, Sami Khedira at his best could also be the driving force of his teams, always a rolemodel with his combative mindset. A box-to-box player in his best days with pretty good finishing skills. However Khedira mostly was assigned the role of the defensive midfield part while more exuberant players like for example Xabi Alonso were given more offensive leeway and thus more possibilities to impress. The situation was the same in the national team were Bastian Schweinsteiger played the more offensive part in central midfield. Khedira is one of those unsung players whose value really comes to show when he is not playing.

League record

2006-07	22	4	VfB Stuttgart
2007-08	24	1	VfB Stuttgart
2008-09	27	7	VfB Stuttgart
2009-10	25	2	VfB Stuttgart
2010-11	25	0	Real Madrid (Spain)
2011-12	28	2	Real Madrid (Spain)
2012-13	25	3	Real Madrid (Spain)
2013-14	13	1	Real Madrid (Spain)
2014-15	11	0	Real Madrid (Spain)
2015-16	20	5	Juventus (Italy)
2016-17	30	5	Juventus (Italy)

#12



Ludwig (Habberer) LEINBERGER (1903-1943)

24 A, Germany, Centre-Half (pyramid)

League champion 1926, 1929

A powerful and athletic centre-half with lots of stamina, Ludwig Leinberger was known as the "master of the short pass" in Fürth's technical 1920s side and he was one of the outstanding personalities in German football during that decade. Leinberger distinguished himself with his dynamic impetus and never-say-die attitude. The strategist Leinberger knew like few others how to rally and instigate his teammates and was thus arguably the most important player for Fürth in the 1926 and 1929 championship winning sides. Unfortunately for Leinberger, Nürnberg's Hans Kalb was technically better and also a better long passer, thus Leinberger could only play as Germany's centre-half when Kalb was not available or out of form. When both played together, Leinberger usually was deployed as left half. After Kalb was banned from the national team due to misconduct in the game vs. Uruguay in the 1928 Olympics, it was Leinberger who finally gained a regular place as centre-half in the national team. Until 1933 Leinberger remained a staple in the national team, but when he joined Köln 1933 his international career did not continue due to injuries. Died in World War 2.

League record

1924-25	0	0	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – Bavaria)
1925-26	23	6	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – Bavaria)
1926-27	27	5	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – Bavaria)
1927-28	26	1	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – North Bavaria)
1928-29	30	14	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – North Bavaria)
1929-30	27	6	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – North Bavaria)
1930-31	22	3	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – North Bavaria)
1931-32	21	4	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – North Bavaria)
1932-33	29	2	SpVgg Fürth (Div. 1 – North Bavaria)
1933-34	4	1	CfR Köln (Div. 1 – Midrhine)



Ulrich (Ulli) STIELIKE (b. 1954)

42 A (3 goals), Germany, Central Midfielder/Libero

League champion 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1987, 1988

League runner-up 1974, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1986

Cup winner 1973, 1980, 1982

Cup finalist 1979, 1983

UEFA Cup 1975, 1985

UEFA Cup finalist 1973

Euro winner 1980

Champions Cup finalist 1981

World Cup finalist 1982

One of Germany's most successful exports during the 1970s and 1980s. Stielike was basically a defensive midfielder who would have loved to play libero for his clubs but only got the chance to play that position in the national team. With Borussia Mönchengladbach and then Real Madrid Stielike won six successive domestic league championships between 1974-75 and 1979-80 which is the record for a German player. Uli Stielike was voted 'best foreign player' in Spain in four successive years (1978 to 1982). Stielike was one of the fiercest players around during his time, very ambitious and systematic in his approach to the game. With Stielike you always knew that he would give his absolute best in every game. In his early days as a professional, many thought Stielike would one day become a classic playmaker, but that estimation proved to be unrealistic. Instead, he established himself as a highly-talented, hard-running and hard-working defensive midfielder with a penchant for adamant tackling. As a midfielder, Stielike was a destroyer and a creator at the same time, with an emphasis on destroying. Stielike was known for his very hard and precise shot, especially in Spain he scored plenty of goals that way (41 goals in 215 games for Real Madrid). One of the reasons why Stielike was so revered in Spain was because he was so consistent. It looked almost like Stielike could not play badly at all.

League record

1972-73	1	0	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1973-74	26	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1974-75	25	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1975-76	33	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1976-77	24	4	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1977-78	27	13	Real Madrid (Spain)
1978-79	24	2	Real Madrid (Spain)
1979-80	31	5	Real Madrid (Spain)
1980-81	29	5	Real Madrid (Spain)
1981-82	28	9	Real Madrid (Spain)
1982-83	28	4	Real Madrid (Spain)
1983-84	23	3	Real Madrid (Spain)
1984-85	25	0	Real Madrid (Spain)
1985-86	27	3	Xamax (Switzerland)
1986-87	28	6	Xamax (Switzerland)
1987-88	12	1	Xamax (Switzerland)

#10



Horst ECKEL (b. 1932)

32 A, Germany, Half Back

League champion 1951, 1953

League runner-up 1954, 1955

World Cup winner 1954

Top Scorer Championship 1951

As a junior Eckel's preferred role was that of center forward and indeed he scored many goals. He debuted in Kaiserslautern's first team in 1950 at the age of 18. Nicknamed 'greyhound' because of his lean, haggard stature, Eckel was the replacement of the injured center forward Ottmar Walter. With his eagerness in training, Eckel constantly worked on his lack of technique. Since the position of center forward was Ottmar Walter's, Eckel tried his luck as an outside right in the early 1950s. Approaching the 1954 World Cup Germany manager Sepp Herberger had already set an eye on Eckel as he was looking for a hard-running right half with lots of stamina. Herberger, who had good contacts to Kaiserslautern's manager Richard Schneider, suggested to Schneider to test Eckel as a half back in spring 1952. Eckel at first was not so delighted about his new role but after he performed well in these games the new role appealed to him because he was now finally a definite starter at Kaiserslautern. His sphere of action was immense and not as restricted as on the right wing, he could also make great use of his great stamina and debuted for Germany as a right half in October 1952. For the next 5-6 years Eckel was considered to be among the best half backs in German football. In the 1954 World Cup final his task was to man-mark Hungary's Nandor Hidegkuti - a task he accomplished well.

League record

1949-50	2	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1950-51	6	7	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1951-52	16	7	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1952-53	27	6	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1953-54	28	4	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1954-55	10	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1955-56	27	6	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1956-57	19	14	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1957-58	29	8	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1958-59	24	7	1. FC Kaiserslautern (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1959-63	-	-	Völklingen (Div. 2)



Albin KITZINGER (1912-1970)
44 A (2 goals), Germany, Half Back

Albin Kitzinger distinguished himself with assuredness on the ball and calmness in distribution. Together with Anderl Kupfer he formed one of the best halves duos of the late-1930s. 'Kicker' stated about this duo in 1939: "One would like to attest that both are perfect fits for the modern game. As partners and as individuals they have no equals in Europe." Kitzinger, small in size, was the driving force, Kupfer the subtle technical player. Mostly playing as left half, but could also be playing as centre-half or right half. He became a starter in Schweinfurt in 1930 aged 18 due to his immense dynamism, excellent vision and inventiveness. In the 8-0 against Denmark in 1937, 'Fussball' noted: "Kitzinger pleased us the most. In defense he was clearly superior in technique and pace to his opponent and in build up he constantly generated splendid interactions with Urban and Szepan in terms of ball control, passing and deft outmanoeuvring of opponents." In 1937 he was called up to represent western Europe in Amsterdam against central Europe and a year later he was selected to play in the World XI against England in Wembley. After World War 2, Kitzinger acted as stopper for Schweinfurt. Altogether he starred in 826 games for his club Schweinfurt 05.

Senior clubs

1929-47	-	-	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – Bavaria)
1947-48	0	0	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)
1948-49	29	0	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)
1949-50	29	0	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)



Maximilian (Max) BREUNIG (1888-1961)

9 A (1 goal), Germany, Centre-Half (pyramid)

League champion 1910

League runner-up 1912

The centre-half of FV Karlsruhe was one of the most popular players in the German Reich during his days and still must be regarded as one of Germany's all-time greatest players. Breunig was very tall (1.94 metres, 6.36 inches), had a large frame and a powerful built. Additionally to football, he also engaged in shot-putting, javelin throw and multi sport race (in the 1912 Olympics Breunig competed in athletics pentalon). Because of his imposing appearance, the people in charge of FV Karlsruhe initially wanted him to be the goalkeeper, but Breunig was intent on being an outfield player. Thus soon he debuted aged 16 on the left wing. The legendary English coach William Townley soon recognized that Breunig's refined technical skills and his great understanding of the game demanded a more central role on the pitch.

Townley moved Breunig (who was reluctant at first) to the centre-half position. A move that would pay off well. Quickly, Breunig established himself not only as the best centre-half in Germany but arguably also as the best footballer in general. A supreme playmaker who pulled all the strings, a incredibly energetic instigator who scored many goals with his hard-shooting left foot. In the 1910 German championship final against Holstein Kiel, he scored a penalty with such power that apparently the goal net was torn (his shooting prowess earned him the name "Bomber"). Internationally, Breunig had a hard time getting past Camillo Ugi, though, when the multi-purpose Ugi was playing as centre-half.

During the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm Swedish newspapers dubbed Breunig the "Football King of Germany" and the famous Austrian manager Hugo Meisl stated that Breunig was the best centre-half of the continent. Breunig could quickly cover a lot of ground due to his spacious steps and was elegant in stopping and passing the ball. World War 1 forced an end to his football career as injuries which he suffered in combat on the western front made it impossible for him to compete in sports afterwards.

Senior clubs

1905-13 FV Karlsruhe

1913-14 Pforzheim



Horst SZYMANIAK (1934-2009)
43 A (2 goals), Germany, Half Back
League runner-up 1964
Cup finalist 1960
Champions Cup 1964

Horst Szymaniak was a technically outstanding left half who was very good at precise long passes but at the same time was a specialist tackler (his tackling was known as 'Schimmi tackle'), impressing with his stamina and commitment. At a time when most players were either offensive or defensive specialists, Szymaniak was considered a complete midfielder because he was a specialist for both offense and defense. Ever since his debut for Germany in November 1956 aged 22, Szymaniak was a starter for the national team. Astonishingly, when Szymaniak left Germany in 1961 to play in Italy, Sepp Herberger didn't drop him from the national team but continued to call him up, such was Herberger's esteem of Szymaniak.

League record

1951-55	50	11	Erkenschwick (Div. 2)
1955-56	23	2	Wuppertal (Div. 1 – West)
1956-57	25	1	Wuppertal (Div. 1 – West)
1957-58	28	4	Wuppertal (Div. 1 – West)
1958-59	15	5	Wuppertal (Div. 2)
1959-60	27	1	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	25	2	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	30	4	Catania (Italy)
1962-63	32	4	Catania (Italy)
1963-64	6	0	Inter (Italy)
1964-65	23	0	Varese (Italy)
1965-66	29	1	Tasmania 1900 Berlin (BL)
1966-67	13	0	Biel (Switzerland)
1967-68	12	1	Chicago Spurs (United States)



Dr. Hans KALB (1899-1945)

15 A (2 goals), Germany, Centre-Half (pyramid)

League champion 1920, 1921, 1924, 1925, 1927

League runner-up 1922

Of all the centre-halves that populated German pitches while the tactical formation of the 'pyramid' was the most common system, Hans Kalb was the most outstanding one. Arguably the single most important player of the famous Nürnberg team of the 1920s, the distinctly left-footed Hans Kalb was a physical giant (1.93 metres, 6.33 inches) who was equally formidable in defense and offense and thus the culmination of the tactical role of the classic centre-half. Looking back, Sepp Herberger once stated that Hans Kalb was not only the best centre-half but also the overall best footballer in Germany. Initially he tried his luck as a centre forward and left half but his lack of pace soon meant that a central role was more fitting for him. In 1919, the Hungarian "wonder footballer" Alfréd Schaffer was Nürnberg's player-manager. Noticing Kalb's talent, Schaffer took Kalb under his wing and soon he emerged as Nürnberg's best player in the important centre-half position.

Kalb was bursting with vigour and looked rough around the edges but possessed a superb ball control. Schaffer taught him tactical insight and general understanding of the game and Kalb's movement became more smooth and controlled. As a centre half, Kalb was able to contain the centre forward defensively and at the same time acted as playmaker of his side. Especially as a playmaker Kalb stood out. 'Kicker' wrote: "His vision was peerless, as was his distribution of the ball to the wing forwards, the 'bite' of his freekicks, his commitment at setpieces and generally his heading. None of his teammates could hold a candle to him." Another concise trademark was his incredibly strong and loud voice. He could shout like a megaphon and constantly did so. It was the rise of Kalb as one of the continent's finest centre-halves that also led to the rise of Nürnberg as one of the continent's finest club sides. Kalb was famous for his long and precise passes which he would spray from a deep defensive position to the wings. His freekicks were feared.

His blackest hour was the 1928 Olympics clash with Uruguay. As was his nature, he was constantly contesting the referee's decisions with his megaphone voice. Kalb was an Englishspeaker and thus the Egypt referee could understand what he was saying. After a while he had enough of Kalb's constant bickering and sent him off the pitch. The German FA felt indignant by such behaviour of the team's skipper and banned Kalb from international action for 1 year. This was the end of his international career, as from now on his rival Ludwig Leinberger of Fürth was preferred to play as centre-half.

With increasing age, Kalb had become a really heavy-set player and his performance level generally deteriorated due to his weight. Kalb was also a staunch opponent of the new tactical trend of the WM system, in which the centre-half was deployed in a far more defensive role than previously. Kalb considered the role of the centre-half as a "sixth forward" but now the tactical trend made the centre-half the "third back" and thus the main task was to contain the centre forward. The "stopper" was born. But Kalb would have none of that, stating: "The system of stonewalling implies: stonewall at any cost, you must not lose." In 1933, after 681 games for Nürnberg, Kalb called it quits as a footballer but he was not yet done with the sport. He became a referee and even refereed the 1935 German championship semi final between FC Schalke 04 and PSV Chemnitz. Kalb died as a military dentist on 5 April 1945.

Senior clubs

1917-33 681 - 1. FC Nürnberg

#5



Rainer BONHOF (b. 1952)

53 A (9 goals), Germany, Midfielder/Stopper/Full Back

League Champion 1971, 1975, 1976, 1977

League runner-up 1974, 1978, 1982

Cup winner 1973, 1979, 1983

UEFA Cup winner 1975

UEFA Cup finalist 1973

CWC winner 1980

World Cup winner 1974

Euro winner 1972, 1980

Euro finalist 1976

Bonhof was a very versatile defensive player who excelled as a defensive midfielder, full back and stopper but is most well-known as a right-sided midfielder, which was his standard role when playing for the German national team. Bonhof lived on his dynamism and his willpower which gave him a dominating position in the teams that he played for. His one standout ability was his freekicks and distant shots which he could unleash on his target with an hitherto almost unknown power and precision. For the kind of player he was, his technical ability in passing was above average, often using the outside of his right boot to deliver crosses and passes. A model athlete that was playing as centre forward in his youth and from time to time as left winger, Bonhof was at his best when he was playing in midfield. Bonhof was a fine marker but also a driving force due to his power and stamina. He was a great header and hard in tackling, feared as a freekick-taker and known as a subtle corner-kick taker that could bend them with a real swerve.

League record

1970-71	11	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1971-72	33	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1972-73	34	5	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1973-74	29	5	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1974-75	28	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1975-76	30	5	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1976-77	33	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1977-78	33	12	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1978-79	32	6	Valencia (Spain)
1979-80	28	4	Valencia (Spain)
1980-81	31	5	Köln (BL)
1981-82	34	9	Köln (BL)
1982-83	9	0	Köln (BL)
1982-83	6	1	Hertha BSC (BL)



Andreas (Anderl) KUPFER (1914-2001)

44 A (1 goal), Germany, Half Back

One of two Schweinfurt players featured in the Breslau XI. Andreas 'Anderl' Kupfer was one of the best half backs in the history of German football and is the only player that was part of Germany's last international game before the end of WWII (1942) as well as the first one after the war (1950). Kupfer made himself a name as the 'right half with the left foot' and together with his Schweinfurt colleague Albin Kitzinger formed the best half back duo in German football. Prosaic in character, Kupfer was a construction worker by profession and very popular with football fans. He was a master of kicking the ball with just moving his ankle joint. His technical skills were rated on the same level as that of the best German forwards of the time and his elegant ways of moving and passing made him a fascinating player to watch. In 1938 he was called up to play for the World XI against England at Wembley. When he retired from international football in 1950, his 44 caps was the third highest after Paul Janes and Ernst Lehner. He finished his active career in 1954 after having played in over 650 games for Schweinfurt 05.

Senior clubs

1932-33	-	-	Schweinfurt 07
1933-47	-	-	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – Bavaria)
1947-48	34	2	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)
1948-49	27	1	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)
1949-50	25	0	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)
1950-51	32	2	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)
1951-52	28	0	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)
1952-53	23	1	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)
1953-54	0	0	Schweinfurt 05 (Div. 1 – South)



Bastian (Basti) SCHWEINSTEIGER (b. 1984)

121 A (24 goals), Germany, Right Wing/Central Midfielder

League champion 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015

League runner-up 2004, 2009, 2012

Cup winner 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2016

Cup finalist 2012

Champions Cup 2013

Champions Cup finalist 2010, 2012

Intercontinental Cup 2013

Europa League 2017

World Cup winner 2014

Euro finalist 2008

German Footballer 2013

As a central midfielder Schweinsteiger set himself apart with his great anticipation, vision and cultured passing, his strength in defensive one-on-one situations, his nous in switching play effectively. Schweinsteiger achieved his breakthrough as right wing player facing quite stiff competition in his club in Sebastian Deisler initially. He spent 6-7 years as a winger but his strategic qualities were somewhat wasted in that role. His robustness and long-range shot ability were qualities better suited for a central role. It was Louis van Gaal and his ability to notice a player's best role on the pitch that finally led to Schweinsteiger getting released from winger duties. A player that is at his best when he has the whole width of the pitch available for his operations. In the centre Schweinsteiger was in the thick of it, not peripheral. It also meant that Schweinsteiger's role was several steps upwards in the hierarchy of Bayern München and the national team. He was given responsibility in the most crucial position on the pitch. Schweinsteiger preferred to be seen as a cross between a 6 and 8, the number 10 was not to his liking, as the touches on the ball is the highest in a central defensive positions, and touches on the ball was what he desired the most after his many years on the wing.

League record

2002-03	14	0	Bayern München (BL)
2003-04	26	4	Bayern München (BL)
2004-05	26	3	Bayern München (BL)
2005-06	30	3	Bayern München (BL)
2006-07	27	4	Bayern München (BL)
2007-08	30	1	Bayern München (BL)
2008-09	31	5	Bayern München (BL)
2009-10	33	2	Bayern München (BL)
2010-11	32	4	Bayern München (BL)
2011-12	22	3	Bayern München (BL)
2012-13	28	7	Bayern München (BL)
2013-14	23	4	Bayern München (BL)
2014-15	20	5	Bayern München (BL)
2015-16	18	1	Manchester Utd. (England)
2016-17	0	0	Manchester Utd. (England)
2016-17	24	3	Chicago Fire (United States)

#2



Stefan EFFENBERG (b. 1968)

35 A (5 goals), Germany, Central Midfielder

League champion 1999, 2000, 2001

League runner-up 1991

Cup winner 1995, 1998, 2000

Cup finalist 1999

Euro finalist 1992

By nature a defensive midfielder with great offensive capabilities. Because of his personality and strong will he became the leading figure in the club teams he played for yet was unable to achieve the same status when playing for Germany. As a midfielder with a sound technique and great skills at long balls, he dominated the midfield with his stamina and bossy mentality. Dangerous at long range shots and freekicks, Effenberg never had any inhibitions committing hard fouls, indeed often he used this as a means to wake up his teammates when things weren't going well. He was booked 111 times, more than any other Bundesliga player.

League record

1987-88	15	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1988-89	29	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1989-90	29	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1990-91	32	9	Bayern München (BL)
1991-92	33	10	Bayern München (BL)
1992-93	30	5	Fiorentina (Italy)
1993-94	26	7	Fiorentina (Italy – Div. 2)
1994-95	30	7	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1995-96	31	7	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1996-97	29	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1997-98	28	8	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1998-99	31	8	Bayern München (BL)
1999-00	27	2	Bayern München (BL)
2000-01	20	4	Bayern München (BL)
2001-02	17	2	Bayern München (BL)
2002-03	19	3	Wolfsburg (BL)
2003-04	15	4	Al-Arabi (Qatar)



Lothar MATTHÄUS (b. 1961)

150 (23 goals), Germany, Central Midfielder/Libero

League champion 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2000

League runner-up 1988, 1993, 1996, 1998

Cup winner 1986, 1998, 2000

Cup finalist 1984, 1985, 1999

UEFA Cup 1991, 1996

UEFA Cup finalist 1980

World Cup winner 1990

World Cup finalist 1982, 1986

Euro winner 1980

German Footballer 1990, 1999

World Footballer 1990, 1991

Ballon d'Or 1990

Lothar Matthäus debuted in the Bundesliga as an 18-year old in 1979 and immediately became a starter for Mönchengladbach. He combined three elements as a player: incredible dynamism, extreme stamina and high commitment. In the beginning his aggressive ways looked as he if he wanted to eat his opponents alive. Blessed with an enormous, technically sound shot, Matthäus debuted for Germany already in his first professional season in 1979-80, winning the first of two major international trophies for Germany when he was part of the team that won the European Championship in Italy.

His position throughout the 1980s until 1993 when he evolved into a libero was in central midfield and sometimes in right midfield as a cross between a no. 6 and no. 10 kind of player. Not a classic playmaker as he never cultivated the sophisticated short passing game. Instead, he was a very good passer of long diagonal balls. He always came forward from a deep midfield position where he was a good ball winner who would rush forward at a very high tempo as soon as he got the ball with lots of determination. In a sense, he was a pioneer of this kind of player that became ever more important in the following decades.

His way of playing was not a result of tactical ideas but sprang from his own will of iron. In this way Matthäus was always a dominant figure in the teams he played for, not as an intelligent, integrative guiding figure but because of his great presence on the pitch. During the early 1980s he found it hard to break into the national team as Paul Breitner stood in his way. When he played, Matthäus was often assigned a special task of man-marking in midfield and achieved international reputation as one of the best players at marking.

His breakthrough in the national team came in 1983-84 and was consolidated the following season after he had joined Bayern München in the summer of 1984. Bayern had lost Breitner and Rummenigge which left a vacant space that Matthäus eagerly filled. Due to his physical fitness and fanaticism he enjoyed a very long career at the very top of the international game which started in the 1970s and ended in the 2000s. With his never flagging iron will, his dynamism and combat strength he managed to be a World Class players for roughly 15 years without being a great strategist.

League record

1978-79 22 20 FC Herzogenaurach (IV. Div.)

1979-80 28 4 Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)

1980-81 33 10 Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)

1981-82 33 3 Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)

1982-83	34	8	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1983-84	34	11	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1984-85	33	16	Bayern München (BL)
1985-86	23	10	Bayern München (BL)
1986-87	31	14	Bayern München (BL)
1987-88	26	17	Bayern München (BL)
1988-89	32	9	Inter (Italy)
1989-90	25	11	Inter (Italy)
1990-91	31	19	Inter (Italy)
1991-92	27	1	Inter (Italy)
1992-93	0	0	Inter (Italy)
1992-93	28	8	Bayern München (BL)
1993-94	33	8	Bayern München (BL)
1994-95	16	5	Bayern München (BL)
1995-96	19	1	Bayern München (BL)
1996-97	28	1	Bayern München (BL)
1997-98	25	3	Bayern München (BL)
1998-99	25	1	Bayern München (BL)
1999-00	15	1	Bayern München (BL)
2000-01	16	0	New York Metrostars (United States)