

OFFENSIVE MIDFIELDERS / PLAYMAKERS / ATTACKING MIDFIELDERS

#50



Winfried (Winnie) SCHÄFER (b. 1950)

Germany, Central Midfielder/Sweeper

League Champion 1970

Cup winner 1970

UEFA Cup 1979

UEFA Cup finalist 1980

A technically skilled central midfielder who was sometimes compared to Günter Netzer during the 1970s. Schäfer was one of the last playmaker types that specialized in spraying long passes from deep. A charismatic player, Winfried Schäfer was always a dominant figure in the teams he played for.

League record

1968-69	17	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1969-70	26	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1969-70	0	0	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1970-71	26	0	Kickers Offenbach (BL)
1971-72	35	16	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1972-73	32	11	Kickers Offenbach (BL)
1973-74	34	7	Kickers Offenbach (BL)
1974-75	33	3	Kickers Offenbach (BL)
1975-76	34	5	Karlsruhe (BL)
1976-77	34	5	Karlsruhe (BL)
1977-78	25	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1978-79	28	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1979-80	29	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1980-81	15	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1981-82	24	2	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1982-83	14	1	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1983-84	28	0	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1984-85	4	0	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)

#49



Herbert NEUMANN (b. 1953)
1 A, Germany, Offensive Midfielder
League champion 1978
Cup winner 1977, 1978, 1983
Cup finalist 1973, 1980

A technically sound playmaker who was dealt as Netzer's or Overath's legitimate successor but lacked the necessary consistency. Herbert Neumann was a very elegant player whose long passing and set-pieces could be excellent and whose 'flat' distant shots were known to be dangerous. A strategic mind who lacked robustness and mental toughness.

League record

1972-73	17	0	Köln (BL)
1973-74	22	4	Köln (BL)
1974-75	31	9	Köln (BL)
1975-76	28	3	Köln (BL)
1976-77	9	0	Köln (BL)
1977-78	34	8	Köln (BL)
1978-79	25	5	Köln (BL)
1979-80	18	6	Köln (BL)
1980-81	25	1	Udinese (Italy)
1981-82	20	1	Bologna (Italy)
1982-83	10	1	Köln (BL)
1983-84	23	4	Piraeus (Greece)
1984-89	-	-	Chiasso (Switzerland – Div. 2)



Paulo SÉRGIO Silvestre do Nascimento (b. 1969)

13 A (2 goals), Brazil, Offensive Midfielder/Forward

League champion 2000, 2001

League runner-up 1997

Cup winner 2000

Champions Cup 2001

Intercontinental Cup 2001

A technically skilled, very flexible forward and midfielder, by nature a support striker not a finisher. Two-footed, the Brazilian was known for his great reach of action. Constantly moving and changing position, he occupied all offensive positions and thus was hard to pin down by the opponent. With his great technique, stamina, pace and agility as well as his straightforward way of dribbling, Paulo Sergio could hold his own on the pitch, but his erratic nature meant that he could lose his form for weeks.

League record

1988-89	7	0	Corinthians (Brazil)
1989-90	-	-	Rio Branca (Brazil – Div. 2)
1990-91	19	2	Corinthians (Brazil)
1991-92	15	1	Corinthians (Brazil)
1992-93	23	2	Corinthians (Brazil)
1993-94	32	17	Leverkusen (BL)
1994-95	28	9	Leverkusen (BL)
1995-96	28	4	Leverkusen (BL)
1996-97	33	17	Leverkusen (BL)
1997-98	34	12	Roma (Italy)
1998-99	23	10	Roma (Italy)
1999-00	28	13	Bayern München (BL)
2000-01	26	5	Bayern München (BL)
2001-02	23	3	Bayern München (BL)
2002-03	0	0	Al-Wahda (UAE)
2002-03	8	0	Bahia (Brazil)

#47



Rainer (Oki) OHLHAUSER (b. 1941)

1 A, Germany, Inside forward/Centre Forward/Libero

League champion 1969

League runner-up 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974

Cup winner 1966, 1967, 1969

CWC winner 1967

A very fast offensive player who liked to drift between a deep midfield position and a striker position. At Bayern in the early-1960s, the pre-Gerd Müller era, the tall and skinny Ohlhauser was the goalgetter and he did a very good job. With Gerd Müller coming into the team, Ohlhauser found a new role as a supplier in central midfield, as the second, more withdrawn central forward in the 4-2-4 scheme of the day. By the end of the 1960s Ohlhauser was still ahead of Gerd Müller as the best goalscorer of Bayern during the 1960s. In 1970 he left Bayern to play in Switzerland where he continued to play for another six years as a libero for FC Zürich and Winterthur.

League record

1957-58	-	2	Dilsberg (regional)
1958-59	-	31	Dilsberg (regional)
1959-60	-	38	Dilsberg (regional)
1960-61	-	29	Sandhausen (Div. 2)
1961-62	26	23	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	29	24	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	35	33	Bayern München (Div. 2)
1964-65	36	43	Bayern München (Div. 2)
1965-66	29	13	Bayern München (BL)
1966-67	31	12	Bayern München (BL)
1967-68	32	19	Bayern München (BL)
1968-69	34	10	Bayern München (BL)
1969-70	34	10	Bayern München (BL)
1970-71	27	10	Grasshoppers (Switzerland)
1971-72	26	6	Grasshoppers (Switzerland)
1972-73	25	5	Grasshoppers (Switzerland)
1973-74	22	1	Grasshoppers (Switzerland)
1974-75	25	4	Grasshoppers (Switzerland)
1975-76	2	0	Winterthur (Switzerland)
1976-80	-	-	inactive
1980-81	-	7	Neckargemünd (regional)

#46



Marcel RADUCANU (b. 1954)
26 A (3 goals), Romania, Offensive Midfielder
League champion 1976, 1978
League runner-up 1977, 1980
Cup winner 1976, 1979
Cup finalist 1977, 1980
Romanian Footballer 1980

A legendary central offensive midfielder from Romania who was rated as one of the best in this position during the 1980s. A great technical player with a wonderful left foot in the style of Wolfgang Overath. Very elegant with great control in tight space, great vision and a superb ability for deadly through balls, Raducanu also excelled at taking freekicks and would score a number of goals each season. Like so many players of his type he was not that consistent in his performances and not known as a tireless worker.

League record

1972-73	6	0	Steaua (Romania)
1973-74	23	4	Steaua (Romania)
1974-75	19	6	Steaua (Romania)
1975-76	31	17	Steaua (Romania)
1976-77	21	6	Steaua (Romania)
1977-78	31	18	Steaua (Romania)
1978-79	34	13	Steaua (Romania)
1979-80	33	23	Steaua (Romania)
1980-81	31	7	Steaua (Romania)
1981-82	-	-	suspendend
1982-83	26	9	Dortmund (BL)
1983-84	26	8	Dortmund (BL)
1984-85	25	7	Dortmund (BL)
1985-86	29	4	Dortmund (BL)
1986-87	32	3	Dortmund (BL)
1987-88	25	0	Dortmund (BL)

#45



Raphael VAN DER VAART (b. 1983)
109 A (25 goals), Netherlands, Offensive Midfielder
League champion 2002, 2004
League runner-up 2003, 2005, 2009, 2010
Cup winner 2002
World Cup finalist 2010

The sympathetic Dutchman was renowned for spectacular goals and excellent passing skill. One of the most productive players in that position during the 2000s. A hybrid between a second striker and an offensive midfielder, van der Vaart knew how to score goals and how to provide them for others. Not quite as explosive as his Brazilian rival in the late-2000s, Diego. Rafael van der Vaart is one of those rare players that could decide a game on his own. His bad luck was that his German club Hamburg was on a downward spiral and it was too much asked of van der Vaart to stop that deadly downward trend.

League record

1999-00	1	0	Ajax (Netherlands)
2000-01	27	7	Ajax (Netherlands)
2001-02	20	14	Ajax (Netherlands)
2002-03	21	18	Ajax (Netherlands)
2003-04	26	7	Ajax (Netherlands)
2004-05	22	6	Ajax (Netherlands)
2005-06	19	9	Hamburg (BL)
2006-07	26	8	Hamburg (BL)
2007-08	29	12	Hamburg (BL)
2008-09	32	5	Real Madrid (Spain)
2009-10	26	6	Real Madrid (Spain)
2010-11	28	13	Tottenham (England)
2011-12	33	11	Tottenham (England)
2012-13	2	0	Tottenham (England)
2012-13	27	5	Hamburg (BL)
2013-14	27	7	Hamburg (BL)
2014-15	24	4	Hamburg (BL)
2015-16	7	0	Betis Sevilla (Spain)
2016-17	12	2	Midtjylland (Denmark)



Luitpold (Poldl) POPP (1893-1968)

5 A (1 goal), Germany, Inside Right/Back

League champion 1920, 1921, 1924, 1925, 1927

League runner-up 1922, 1934

Top Scorer Championship 1921, 1922, 1924

A player of two careers: First as a productive inside forward, later on as a purely defensive back. Poldl Popp was a tall, heavysset man, very strong in one-on-one situations, a valuable team player with a very sound technique and a feared shooter of the ball. One of the main players of the dominant Nürnberg club during the 1920s. As an allrounder, Popp had been deployed occasionally in slightly withdrawn tactical roles (half back, back) but by the mid-1920s, the newcoming Georg Hochgesang was considered a more fitting player in the inside right position and Popp, being the team player that he was, uncomplainingly accepted to continue playing as a purely defensive back. In this new role, Popp quickly established himself as equally valuable as that of forward, in fact he was soon known as an "iron-like and undaunted" defender. He captained Nürnberg in the 1934 German championship final against FC Schalke 04 at the ripe age of 41. When he retired in 1935 at the aged of 42, he had competed in 870 games for Nürnberg. Popp was still playing for his local club SC Worzeldorf in 1960, aged 67. He was killed in a car accident in 1968.

Senior clubs

1910-17 - - Pfeil Nürnberg

1917-35 870 - 1. FC Nürnberg



Rodolfo Esteban CARDOSO (b. 1968)
8 A (1 goal), Argentina, Offensive Midfielder

Cardoso was one of the first of a new kind of 'playmaker' that did not define themselves by 'making the play' by dropping at times quite deep right in front of their own box but who instead advanced more upfront and who defined themselves by getting dangerous in front of the goal. Cardoso was a technically excellent player, especially strong with his left foot in dribbling and shooting.

League record

1986-89	58	6	Estudiantes de La Plata (Argentina)
1989-90	14	0	Homburg (BL)
1990-91	38	4	Homburg (Div. 2)
1991-92	17	2	Homburg (Div. 2)
1992-93	46	4	Homburg (Div. 2)
1993-94	33	12	SC Freiburg (BL)
1994-95	30	16	SC Freiburg (BL)
1995-96	24	2	Bremen (BL)
1996-97	8	0	Bremen (BL)
1996-97	20	2	Hamburg (BL)
1997-98	15	1	Hamburg (BL)
1997-98	11	1	Boca Juniors (Argentina)
1998-99	34	5	Estudiantes de La Plata (Argentina)
1999-00	28	8	Hamburg (BL)
2000-01	8	1	Hamburg (BL)
2001-02	9	2	Hamburg (BL)
2002-03	22	3	Hamburg (BL)
2003-04	9	0	Hamburg (BL)



Albert SING (1917-2008)

9 A (1 goal), Germany, Inside Left

League champion 1957

League runner-up 1953

Cup winner 1953

Cup finalist 1956

Albert Sing was an inside left who impressed with his great stamina and fighting capacity, an offensive enforcer who lived on a rare combination of sound technique and athleticism. Nicknamed "iron Albert", he was severely wounded shortly before the end of World War II when he was hit by several shots in the stomach and spent 6 months in a hospital. He was greatly successful in the 1950s as player-manager for Young Boys Bern in Switzerland.

Senior clubs

1936-40	-	-	Kickers Stuttgart
1940-41	-	-	VfR Mannheim
1941-47	-	-	Kickers Stuttgart
1947-48	22	2	Kickers Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1948-49	5	0	Kickers Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1949-50	-	-	Schaffhausen (Switzerland - Div. 2)
1950-51	0	0	Young Boys (Switzerland)
1951-52	19	9	Young Boys (Switzerland)
1952-53	0	0	Young Boys (Switzerland)
1953-54	17	10	Young Boys (Switzerland)
1954-55	20	6	Young Boys (Switzerland)
1955-56	0	0	Young Boys (Switzerland)
1956-57	1	0	Young Boys (Switzerland)

#41



Peter GROSSER (b. 1938)
2 A, Germany, Inside Forward
League Champion 1966
League runner-up 1967
Cup winner 1964
CWC finalist 1965

Playmaker of Bayern München who caused a bit of an uproar when he joined local rivals TSV 1860 in 1963, where he immediately became the dominating presence in midfield and together with Petar Radenkovic and Rudolf Brunnenmeier formed the backbone of the successful TSV 1860 team of the mid-1960s.

League record

1958-59	24	15	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	27	18	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	25	12	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	30	9	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	28	11	Bayern München (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	18	5	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1964-65	29	12	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1965-66	32	18	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1966-67	22	8	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1967-68	22	6	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1968-69	7	0	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1969-70	23	4	Salzburg (Austria)
1970-71	29	9	Salzburg (Austria)
1971-72	26	9	Salzburg (Austria)
1972-73	23	2	Salzburg (Austria)
1973-74	29	6	Salzburg (Austria)
1974-75	34	2	Salzburg (Austria)



Tomáš ROSICKY (b. 1980)
 105 A (23 goals), Czech Republic, Offensive Midfielder
 League champion 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002
 Cup winner 2014, 2015
 Cup finalist 2001
 Czech Footballer 2001, 2002, 2006

During his years playing for Dortmund, Tomas Rosicky was a technically supreme creator and masterful short passer. Swirling and full of ideas when he was at his best, he initially looked a bit too fragile physically but became more robust as years went on. On the downside is that he's never been really productive in front of the goal and generally did not meet the high expectations people had of him to due his immense talent. Rosicky did better in Dortmund when he was playing slightly withdrawn and not directly behind the forwards. It gave him more touches on the ball and a better overview of the situation.

League record

1998-99	3	0	Sparta Praha (Czech Republic)
1999-00	24	5	Sparta Praha (Czech Republic)
2000-01	14	3	Sparta Praha (Czech Republic)
2000-01	15	0	Dortmund (BL)
2001-02	30	5	Dortmund (BL)
2002-03	30	4	Dortmund (BL)
2003-04	19	2	Dortmund (BL)
2004-05	27	4	Dortmund (BL)
2005-06	28	5	Dortmund (BL)
2006-07	26	3	Arsenal (England)
2007-08	18	6	Arsenal (England)
2008-09	0	0	Arsenal (England)
2009-10	25	3	Arsenal (England)
2010-11	21	0	Arsenal (England)
2011-12	28	1	Arsenal (England)
2012-13	10	2	Arsenal (England)
2013-14	27	2	Arsenal (England)
2014-15	15	2	Arsenal (England)
2015-16	0	0	Arsenal (England)
2016-17	1	0	Sparta Praha (Czech Republic)



Johan MICOUD (b. 1973)

17 A (1 goal), France, Offensive Midfielder

League champion 1999, 2004

League runner-up 2006, 2008

Cup winner 2002, 2004

Euro winner 2000

The Frenchman was a superb passer but lacked consistency to really challenge the top French players at the time. A competent distributor of the ball behind the strikers and a goal threat himself. Not the greatest teamplayer, not keen on contributing defensively to his team's efforts. A cunning strategist with the ability to play the perfectly weighted final pass like few others during his time. During his years in Bremen, "le Chief" was the undisputed leader of the team. His style was that of a 'classic' no. 10: able to dictate the rhythm of the game via his passing or offensive pressing when out of possession. The lethal through ball was his main weapon (played to Ailton) but he was also an accomplished scorer himself due to his supreme technique and precision finesse. Unluckily for Micoud, the French national team already had Zinedine Zidane and Robert Pires, thus his exploits on that level were cut short. Sometimes Micoud was a really difficult character, he refused to learn German and even resorted to physical assaults on teammates in training sessions. Micoud was not a man of mediocrity – he either was superb or he was really bad, nothing in between.

League record

1992-93	33	3	Cannes (France – Div. 2)
1993-94	34	3	Cannes (France)
1994-95	33	7	Cannes (France)
1995-96	32	5	Cannes (France)
1996-97	36	8	Bordeaux (France)
1997-98	29	4	Bordeaux (France)
1998-99	31	9	Bordeaux (France)
1999-00	31	6	Bordeaux (France)
2000-01	29	4	Parma (Italy)
2001-02	18	5	Parma (Italy)
2002-03	28	5	Bremen (BL)
2003-04	32	10	Bremen (BL)
2004-05	33	8	Bremen (BL)
2005-06	30	8	Bremen (BL)
2006-07	32	5	Bordeaux (France)
2007-08	29	5	Bordeaux (France)



Branko (Brane) OBLAK (b. 1947)

46 A (6 goals), Yugoslavia, Offensive Midfielder

League champion 1974, 1975, 1980

League runner-up 1977

Cup winner 1974

Cup finalist 1970

Oblak was a technically outstanding playmaker from Slovenia with neat footwork and great abilities in short passing. An erratic character, not always consistent, but a great personality on the pitch who could control the rhythm of a game and who was a vital influence on his teammates. With his left foot he was a fine dribbler in tight space.

League record

1965-66	2	1	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)
1966-67	13	3	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)
1967-68	29	4	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)
1968-69	22	4	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)
1969-70	29	5	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)
1970-71	30	9	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)
1971-72	28	4	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)
1972-73	27	4	Ljubljana (Yugoslavia)
1973-74	28	5	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1974-75	7	4	Hajduk Split (Yugoslavia)
1975-76	21	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1976-77	28	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1977-78	23	1	Bayern München (BL)
1978-79	28	3	Bayern München (BL)
1979-80	20	1	Bayern München (BL)



Klaus ZACZYK (b. 1945)

1 A (1 goal), Germany, Offensive Midfielder

League runner-up 1976

Cup winner 1976

Cup finalist 1974

CWC winner 1977

For roughly a decade Klaus Zaczyk was a household name among Bundesliga midfielders, technically very good, lightfooted and intelligent with an eye for the goal. His specialty were his calmly played short passes by which he gave structure to his team's efforts. He tended to play wide more than centrally. Because of the great competition in midfield during his time, he was capped only once, since he lacked the genius of Overath or Netzer. Zaczyk preferred to operate in the background as link between defense and offense, avoiding the gestures of the great conductors. But in that role, the national team preferred more hard working, intensely running players like Herbert Wimmer or Uli Hoeness, not a ball distributor like Zaczyk, preferred were players that would surge forward with the ball instead of passing it. Klaus Zaczyk himself was not a flashy player, but on a national level one of the most valuable midfielders year after year who maintained a very high level with high consistency.

League record

1963-64	6	0	Karlsruhe (BL)
1964-65	14	2	Karlsruhe (BL)
1965-66	20	1	Karlsruhe (BL)
1966-67	33	5	Karlsruhe (BL)
1967-68	31	3	Karlsruhe (BL)
1968-69	34	3	Nürnberg (BL)
1969-70	31	6	Hamburg (BL)
1970-71	32	9	Hamburg (BL)
1971-72	32	5	Hamburg (BL)
1972-73	33	7	Hamburg (BL)
1973-74	32	7	Hamburg (BL)
1974-75	33	5	Hamburg (BL)
1975-76	24	2	Hamburg (BL)
1976-77	25	3	Hamburg (BL)
1977-78	20	3	Hamburg (BL)
1978-79	29	2	Hessen Kassel (Div. 3)
1979-80	33	8	Hessen Kassel (Div. 3)
1980-81	35	3	Hessen Kassel (Div. 2)
1981-82	30	3	Hessen Kassel (Div. 2)



Günter HERRMANN (1939-2012)

9 A (1 goal), Germany, Inside Forward

Cup winner 1974

Cup finalist 1960

Considered a great offensive talent in his youth, Herrmann was blessed with a supreme technique, which prompted Fritz Walter to assert that Herrmann “has outstanding technical attributes”. Herrmann was a playmaker and goalscorer at the same time, however he did not manage to have a career as great as his talent had promised.

League record

1956-57	1	0	Trier (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1957-58	24	5	Trier (Div. 1 – Southwest)
1958-59	21	3	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	22	5	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	30	3	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	29	7	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	13	1	Karlsruhe (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	16	4	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1964-65	28	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1965-66	33	7	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1966-67	33	8	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1967-68	24	5	Karlsruhe (BL)
1969-69	24	3	Sion (Switzerland)
1969-70	-	-	Sion (Switzerland – Div. 2)
1970-71	20	2	Sion (Switzerland)
1971-72	11	0	Sion (Switzerland)
1972-73	26	2	Sion (Switzerland)
1973-74	0	0	Sion (Switzerland)

#35



Rolf GEIGER (b. 1934)
8 A (2 goals), Germany, Inside Forward
Cup winner 1958

Once described by a sports writer as a player who relied on his unerring instincts and who possessed a sixth sense, Geiger was an excellent technical player and a dangerous goalscorer. Not rarely was the bricklayer making headlines because he was involved in brawls.

League record

1955-56	17	2	Kickers Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1956-57	18	4	Kickers Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1957-58	3	1	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1958-59	28	16	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	29	13	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1960-61	28	15	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1961-62	28	14	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	24	5	Mantova (Italy)
1963-64	27	9	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1964-65	28	9	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1965-66	15	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1966-67	0	0	VfB Stuttgart (BL)

**DIEGO Ribas da Cunha** (b. 1985)

34 A (4 goals), Brazil, Offensive Midfielder

League champion 2002, 2004, 2006, 2014

League runner-up 2005, 2015, 2016

Cup winner 2006, 2009

Cup finalist 2016

Europa League 2012

Champions Cup finalist 2014

UEFA Cup finalist 2009

Intercontinental Cup 2004

Copa America 2004, 2007

Diego was an offensive maverick that was able to enchant spectators with his superb imagination and technical extraclass. Arguably one of the most skillful players in Bundesliga history, Diego was a greatly skilled dribbler and regularly inspired teammates and spectators with his showpieces (once he scored a goal from 63 metres for Bremen). Despite his great individual skill Diego was not an egotist on the ball but always knew when he had to pass to achieve maximum effect. Excellent in providing and goalscoring, Diego was also cherished by his teammates because – unlike his predecessor Johan Micoud – he was willing to contribute defensively to Bremen's success and Diego was also more consistent in his performances than the Frenchman. In Wolfsburg, however, Diego is also remembered as an egoistical diva that let his teammates down in their struggle against relegation. Although Diego proved to be a really productive midfielder, he still had more of a classic playmaker in him than of a productive forward. His home was always the centre of midfield behind the forwards. A player that mastered one of the most difficult skills in football: almost perfect technique at very high pace.

League record

2001-02	28	10	Santos (Brazil)
2002-03	33	9	Santos (Brazil)
2003-04	9	4	Santos (Brazil)
2004-05	30	3	Porto (Portugal)
2005-06	18	1	Porto (Portugal)
2006-07	33	13	Bremen (BL)
2007-08	30	13	Bremen (BL)
2008-09	21	12	Bremen (BL)
2009-10	33	5	Juventus (Italy)
2010-11	0	0	Juventus (Italy)
2010-11	30	6	Wolfsburg (BL)
2011-12	30	3	Atletico Madrid (Spain)
2012-13	32	10	Wolfsburg (BL)
2013-14	15	3	Wolfsburg (BL)
2013-14	13	1	Atletico Madrid (Spain)
2014-15	25	3	Fenerbahce (Turkey)
2015-16	28	2	Fenerbahce (Turkey)
2015-16	17	6	Flamengo (Brazil)
2016-17	18	5	Flamengo (Brazil)

#33



Kurt JARA (b. 1950)

59 A (15 goals), Austria, Midfielder

League champion 1971, 1972, 1973, 1982, 1983, 1984

Cup winner 1970, 1973, 1983

The Austrian was a classic playmaker who preferred to play in left midfield with a very strong left foot and a subtle touch, quick player and expert freekick-taker.

League record

1969-70	30	7	Innsbruck (Austria)
1970-71	27	12	Innsbruck (Austria)
1971-72	28	8	Innsbruck (Austria)
1972-73	28	13	Innsbruck (Austria)
1973-74	24	5	Valencia (Spain)
1974-75	33	6	Valencia (Spain)
1975-76	31	4	Duisburg (BL)
1976-77	34	7	Duisburg (BL)
1977-78	30	4	Duisburg (BL)
1978-79	34	4	Duisburg (BL)
1979-80	31	4	Duisburg (BL)
1980-81	31	2	Duisburg (BL)
1981-82	25	8	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1982-83	29	7	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1983-84	30	5	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1984-85	27	4	Grashoppers (Switzerland)



Josef (Jupp) RÖHRIG (1925-2014)
 12 A (2 goals), Germany, Inside Left/Left Half
 League runner-up 1960
 Cup finalist 1954

Due to the war his career as a senior footballer only started at age 25 in 1950, Röhrig was known as a very versatile player with an exceptional technique and high intelligence. Röhrig was one of the outstanding players of Köln during the 1950s, especially Hans Schäfer on the left wing benefitted enormously from Röhrig's service. Hans Schäfer later said: "without Jupp Röhrig I would never have become the player I became." Often compared to Fritz Walter in his style, Röhrig's international career was somewhat lacking due to Fritz Walter reigning supremely in his position and also because he was quite injury-prone. Röhrig had made the squad for the 1954 World Cup but had to leave the team after a rupture of his Achilles tendon shortly before the start put him out for months.

League record

1950-51	28	1	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1951-52	30	10	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1952-53	28	5	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1953-54	21	8	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1954-55	27	6	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1955-56	0	0	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1956-57	19	0	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1957-58	22	1	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1958-59	25	2	Köln (Div. 1 – West)
1959-60	16	2	Köln (Div. 1 – West)



MARCELINHO Marcelo Dos Santos (b. 1975)

5 A (1 goal), Brazil, Offensive Midfielder

Cup winner 2001

A laborious yet technically strong offensive midfielder who was one of the most interesting players in Germany during the 2000s. Fine ball control in his left foot, Marcelinho was a really effective offensive player with lots of style and verve. By nature, Marcelinho was not a classic playmaker but often sought to score himself. The Brazilian was a moody player, things had to be fitting him otherwise he was not playing well. At his best an individualist, at his worse an egotist that did more harm than good. In 2007 Marcelinho saved Wolfsburg from relegation when he joined them after a short spell at Trabzonspor. This time, Marcelinho acted as saviour, dropped his antics, instead of self-will he was effective, instead of antics he showed commitment. The diva had become a rolemodel for the others, scoring five goals and assisting eight times. This was the Marcelinho that hopefully will be remembered in the long run. This Marcelinho never hid himself on the pitch, even when he was not playing well, he always showed up and was always close to the ball.

League record

1994-95	7	0	Santos (Brazil)
1995-96	42	7	Rio Branco (Brazil)
1996-00	60	15	São Paulo (Brazil)
2000-01	19	3	Marseille (France)
2000-01	0	0	Gremio Porto Alegre (Brazil)
2001-02	33	13	Hertha BSC (BL)
2002-03	33	14	Hertha BSC (BL)
2003-04	25	8	Hertha BSC (BL)
2004-05	32	18	Hertha BSC (BL)
2005-06	32	12	Hertha BSC (BL)
2006-07	17	2	Trabzonspor (Turkey)
2006-07	17	5	Wolfsburg (BL)
2007-08	33	7	Wolfsburg (BL)
2008-09	19	8	Flamengo (Brazil)
2009-10	34	14	Coritiba (Brazil)
2010-11	7	1	São Paulo (Brazil)
2010-11	23	6	Recife (Brazil)
2011-12	33	12	Recife (Brazil)
2012-13	19	3	Gremio Barueri (Brazil - regional)
2012-13	33	5	Boa (Brazil - regional)
2013-14	31	12	Fortaleza (Brazil - regional)
2014-15	16	8	Inter de Lages (Brazil - regional)
2014-15	29	5	Joinville (Brazil)
2015-16	13	4	Oeste (Brazil - regional)
2015-16	9	3	Inter de Lages (Brazil - regional)
2016-17	4	2	Ypiranga (Brazil - regional)
2016-17	14	4	Treze (Brazil - regional)
2016-17	11	4	Portuguesa (Brazil - regional)



RAFFAEL Caetano de Araújo (b. 1985)

Brazil, Offensive Midfielder

League champion 2006, 2007

A disguised striker or a string puller in midfield – Raffael's role might best be described by the ambiguous shirt number "9.5", as he was hard to pin down due to his commuting between attack and midfield. One of the very rare players that combined efficiency and elegance, the Brazilian is a player for special moments, able of the one move that can disintegrate a solid defensive unit, a player of great imagination and technical class.

League record

2005-06	31	14	FC Zürich (Switzerland)
2006-07	31	13	FC Zürich (Switzerland)
2007-08	15	12	FC Zürich (Switzerland)
2007-08	15	4	Hertha BSC (BL)
2008-09	33	6	Hertha BSC (BL)
2009-10	31	7	Hertha BSC (BL)
2010-11	30	10	Hertha BSC (BL)
2011-12	31	6	Hertha BSC (BL)
2012-13	9	1	Dynamo Kyiv (Ukraine)
2012-13	16	2	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2013-14	34	14	Mönchengladbach (BL)
2014-15	31	12	Mönchengladbach (BL)
2015-16	31	13	Mönchengladbach (BL)
2016-17	13	5	Mönchengladbach (BL)



Andreas (Andi) HERZOG (b. 1968)
103 A (26 goals), Germany, Offensive Midfielder
League champion 1987, 1988, 1993
League runner-up 1995, 1996
Cup winner 1987, 1994, 1999
Cup finalist 1990, 1991, 2000
UEFA Cup 1996
Austrian Footballer 1992

One of Austria's all-time best players, Andreas Herzog was a classic representative of the old Viennese school of football, fast and lightfooted with a very subtle yet powerful left foot who was known for subtle chips as well as hard shots. Very adept freekick-taker. A master of the "deadly" through ball he could also be used as a left winger with good crossing ability. What this intelligent footballer, who was always playing on a consistently high level, lacked was mental toughness, probably the main reason why he failed in his one season at Bayern during the mid-1990s. Placid Bremen was a place where he blossomed and he quickly returned to Werder in 1996 where he soon recovered from the nightmarish Bayern episode.

League record

1986-87	4	0	Rapid Wien (Austria)
1986-87	7	2	First Vienna FC (Austria)
1987-88	5	0	Rapid Wien (Austria)
1988-89	34	8	Rapid Wien (Austria)
1989-90	27	8	Rapid Wien (Austria)
1990-91	30	6	Rapid Wien (Austria)
1991-92	33	11	Rapid Wien (Austria)
1992-93	33	10	Bremen (BL)
1993-94	30	6	Bremen (BL)
1994-95	31	10	Bremen (BL)
1995-96	28	2	Bayern München (BL)
1996-97	29	15	Bremen (BL)
1997-98	18	4	Bremen (BL)
1998-99	27	3	Bremen (BL)
1999-00	27	6	Bremen (BL)
2000-01	32	2	Bremen (BL)
2001-02	9	1	Bremen (BL)
2001-02	12	1	Rapid Wien (Austria)
2002-03	29	3	Rapid Wien (Austria)
2003-04	27	4	Los Angeles Galaxy (United States)



Shinji KAGAWA (b. 1989)

79 A (25 goals), Japan, Offensive Midfielder

League champion 2011, 2012, 2013

Cup winner 2012, 2017

Cup finalist 2015, 2016

Asian Cup 2011

A hard-running and very industrious midfielder, Shinji Kagawa has a good eye and is quick as a thought in his operations, fresh and very dynamic. Very skilled at high-tempo dribbling, adept at quick body turns and enormously effective in his whole approach. Kagawa is artist and worker in one, a tenacious runner with superb technique, marries overview and dangerousness in front of the goal, provider and executor in one.

League record

2005-06	0	0	Cerezo Osaka (Japan - Div. 2)
2006-07	35	5	Cerezo Osaka (Japan - Div. 2)
2007-08	35	16	Cerezo Osaka (Japan - Div. 2)
2008-09	44	27	Cerezo Osaka (Japan - Div. 2)
2009-10	11	7	Cerezo Osaka (Japan)
2010-11	18	8	Dortmund (BL)
2011-12	31	13	Dortmund (BL)
2012-13	20	6	Manchester United (England)
2013-14	18	0	Manchester United (England)
2014-15	0	0	Manchester United (England)
2014-15	28	5	Dortmund (BL)
2015-16	29	9	Dortmund (BL)
2016-17	21	1	Dortmund (BL)



Hans (Hennes) KÜPPERS (b. 1938)
7 A (2 goals), Germany, Inside Forward
League champion 1966, 1971, 1972
League runner-up 1967
Cup winner 1959, 1964, 1970

An inside left, Hans Küppers was dubbed “master of the long ball” who formed a well-oiled twosome with goalgetter Rudi Brunnenmeier for TSV 1860 München in the 1960s. Only seven caps probably leave a little bit to be desired for a fine player like him, but possibly the competition of similar players like Werner Krämer, Helmut Haller and especially Wolfgang Overath was too much.

League record

1957-58	-	-	SW Essen (Div. 2)
1958-59	-	-	SW Essen (Div. 2)
1959-60	28	6	SW Essen (Div. 1 – West)
1960-61	-	-	SW Essen (Div. 2)
1961-62	28	12	TSV 1860 München (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	29	4	TSV 1860 München (Div. 1 – South)
1963-64	21	7	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1964-65	24	10	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1965-66	19	4	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1966-67	34	14	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1967-68	22	12	TSV 1860 München (BL)
1968-69	33	10	Nürnberg (BL)
1969-70	30	10	Innsbruck (Austria)
1970-71	30	16	Innsbruck (Austria)
1971-72	9	4	Innsbruck (Austria)

#26



Wilhelm (Willi) HUBERTS (b. 1938)

4 A (2 goals), Austria, Inside Forward/Libero

Cup winner 1971

Cup finalist 1964

A technically supreme player, one of the finest to have played in Germany during the 1960s, the Austrian was originally a centre forward in the vein of Matthias Sindelar. When playing for Frankfurt though, he was acting as a goalscoring playmaker and by the late-1960s was one of the first creative sweepers (liberos) playing in Germany.

League record

1955-56	17	5	Graz (Austria)
1956-57	25	2	Graz (Austria)
1957-58	24	7	Graz (Austria)
1958-59	26	4	Graz (Austria)
1959-60	18	8	Graz (Austria)
1960-61	8	2	Graz (Austria)
1961-62	-	-	New York Hungaria
1962-63	0	0	Roma (Italy)
1963-64	29	18	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1964-65	27	9	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1965-66	32	18	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1966-67	33	7	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1967-68	29	6	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1968-69	33	6	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1969-70	30	2	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1970-71	29	0	Austria Wien (Austria)
1971-72	24	1	Graz (Austria)
1972-73	30	0	Graz (Austria)
1973-74	30	0	Graz (Austria)



Kamill (Camillo) UGI (1884-1970)

15 A (1 goal), Germany, Half Back/Inside Forward

League champion 1906

League runner-up 1911

Son of an Italian father, Camillo Ugi is rated as one of the best players in Germany pre-WW1. Characterised as an allrounder, he was the first wayfaring player at a time when players usually played for no more than two clubs at most during their career. A tall man with exceptional technical skills, he was a master of spraying long passes with the same casual ease as Franz Beckenbauer 50-60 years later. At the same time, he was an untiring and uncompromising player who was very strong in one-on-one duels. He continued to be an active player until the age of 43 and it was only a serious motorbike accident that finally led to his retirement.

Senior clubs

1902-05 BC Leipzig
1905-06 Germania São Paulo (Brazil)
1905-06 VfB Leipzig
1906-07 SC Dresden
1907-09 VfB Leipzig
1909-10 FSV Frankfurt
1910-11 VfB Leipzig
1911-12 Helvétique Marseille (France)
1911-14 Spfr. Breslau
1918-19 Spfr. Leipzig
1919-21 VfB Leipzig
1921-26 Spfr. Leipzig



Thomas VON HEESSEN (b. 1961)
Germany, Offensive Midfieler
League champion 1982, 1983
League runner-up 1981, 1984, 1987
Cup winner 1987
Champions Cup 1983

A lightfooted, technically very good midfielder who became Felix Magath's successor as playmaker for Hamburg. With his good footwork he was able to free himself in tight situations, was a neat passer and freekick taker and a passable scorer of goals. Interestingly he was never once capped by Germany, probably because he lacked the absolute will and rigor to be an all-dominating boss in midfield.

League record

1980-81	4	1	Hamburg (BL)
1981-82	20	7	Hamburg (BL)
1982-83	20	6	Hamburg (BL)
1983-84	15	2	Hamburg (BL)
1984-85	32	15	Hamburg (BL)
1985-86	33	8	Hamburg (BL)
1986-87	33	12	Hamburg (BL)
1987-88	31	7	Hamburg (BL)
1988-89	33	9	Hamburg (BL)
1989-90	32	8	Hamburg (BL)
1990-91	25	2	Hamburg (BL)
1991-92	26	2	Hamburg (BL)
1992-93	31	6	Hamburg (BL)
1993-94	33	14	Hamburg (BL)
1994-95	26	7	Bielefeld (Div. 3)
1995-96	28	7	Bielefeld (Div. 2)
1996-97	10	1	Bielefeld (Div. 1)



Rudolf (Rudi) GELLESCH (1914-1990)
20 A (1 goal), Germany, Inside Right
League Champion 1935, 1937, 1939, 1940
League runner-up 1938, 1941
Cup winner 1937
Cup finalist 1935, 1936, 1941, 1942

One of the many talents emanating from FC Schalke 04 during the 1930s, young Rudolf Gellesch replaced Fritz Szepan as inside forward after the Schalke legend had become the centre half. Being a talented threader of moves on the pitch, Gellesch appeared to be a double of Szepan. Together with Ernst Kuzorra, Gellesch became the playmaker of FC Schalke 04 during the most trophy-laden phase in the club's history. One of his finest performances came in the 1935 German championship final which Schalke won 6-4 against Stuttgart. One report read: "the crowd of 74,000 in Cologne repeatedly noticed a tall, haggard, smooth young man who dictated the ball and the game, always this young fellow, again and again, he acrobatically shielded the ball with his elastic body from robust Swabian attacks. Gently his exact passes reached his teammates. People looked into the programm. Who is this? Gellesch? Isn't that the replacement of Szepan, because he has to play at the back?" From 1935 on, the "replacement" Gellesch took part in every one of the great victories of the famous Schalke side, mostly as an inside right but also occasionally as right half, whenever Szepan had resumed his old familiar role of inside right. Gellesch was characterised as a blend of elegance and dynamism and is hence remembered as one of the finest German players of his era.

League record

1933-34	-	2	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – Westphalia)
1934-35	14	4	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1935-36	24	15	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1936-37	19	4	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1937-38	23	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1938-39	23	2	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1939-40	4	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1940-41	21	1	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1941-42	10	4	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1942-43	4	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1943-44	1	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1944-45	0	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)

#22



Ralf FALKENMAYER (b. 1963)
4 A, Germany, Midfielder/Left Back
Cup winner 1981
UEFA Cup 1988

Ralf Falkenmayer was already regarded to be a very great playmaker talent in his juniors days and he subsequently found a regular place in the Eintracht Frankfurt side of the early-1980s at the age of 18. Despite some ups and downs he remained a starter until 1995. He was blessed with a delicate touch in his left foot which enabled him to deliver superbly weighted passes. As a player he was probably a bit too lightfooted and frail, never really fully unlocking his great potential. He was mostly playing either in central midfield or as an attacking left back.

League record

1980-81	2	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1981-82	32	3	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1982-83	32	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1983-84	34	8	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1984-85	23	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1985-86	28	2	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1986-87	22	5	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1987-88	29	6	Leverkusen (BL)
1988-89	19	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1989-90	33	6	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1990-91	21	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1991-92	33	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1992-93	17	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1993-94	24	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1994-95	24	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1995-96	12	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)

#21



Dariusz WOSZ (b. 1969)

17 A (1 goal), Germany, Offensive Midfielder

Wosz physically resembled Thomas Hässler and both shared traits like witty playfulness, high ball control and passing skills. While Hässler felt at home in a wide area, Wosz preferred to play behind the two strikers. A strategist, Dariusz Wosz was a quite sensitive "artist" who was a specialist at setpieces. Wosz was a very fine dribbler in central midfield who would draw opposing players his way and then use his skill at through balls to set up his teammates.

League record

1987-88	22	2	Halle (East Germany)
1988-89	21	5	Halle (East Germany)
1989-90	24	5	Halle (East Germany)
1990-91	26	3	Halle (East Germany)
1991-92	22	5	Halle (Div. 2)
1991-92	16	0	Bochum (BL)
1992-93	33	3	Bochum (BL)
1993-94	34	3	Bochum (BL)
1994-95	32	2	Bochum (BL)
1995-96	31	3	Bochum (Div. 2)
1996-97	32	0	Bochum (BL)
1997-98	33	5	Bochum (BL)
1998-99	31	3	Hertha BSC (BL)
1999-00	32	5	Hertha BSC (BL)
2000-01	22	3	Hertha BSC (BL)
2001-02	27	6	Bochum (Div. 2)
2002-03	30	2	Bochum (BL)
2003-04	33	4	Bochum (BL)
2004-05	29	2	Bochum (BL)
2005-06	15	1	Bochum (Div. 2)
2006-07	1	1	Bochum (BL)

#20



Hans (Hannes) BONGARTZ (b. 1951)

4 A, Germany, Central Midfielder

League runner-up 1977

Cup finalist 1981

Euro finalist 1976

Hannes Bongartz was one of the last classic playmakers of the Bundesliga. Throughout his career he was likened to Günter Netzer, or at least seen as the one player that could resemble Netzer the most. Ultimately though “Beanpole”, as he was nicknamed, was too frail to meet this expectation. Apart from that, Bongartz possessed all the required abilities of a playmaker: lightfootedness, well-balanced movement (which he attributed to his time as a trick cyclist in his youth), a brilliant technique, a wonderful feeling for well-weighted long range passes and dangerous freekicking. In Kaiserslautern, he was considered to be the technically best midfield player since Fritz Walter 30 years before him.

League record

1970-71	23	3	SC Bonn (Div. 2)
1971-72	31	9	Wattenscheid (Div. 2)
1972-73	34	10	Wattenscheid (Div. 2)
1973-74	34	18	Wattenscheid (Div. 2)
1974-75	34	6	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1975-76	32	8	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1976-77	31	7	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1977-78	34	3	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1978-79	32	3	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1979-80	34	2	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1980-81	33	3	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1981-82	28	4	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1982-83	29	1	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1983-84	11	2	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)

#19



Asgeir SIGURVINSSON (b. 1955)

45 A (5 goals), Iceland, Offensive Midfielder

League champion 1984

League runner-up 1980

Cup winner 1972, 1981, 1982

Cup finalist 1986

UEFA Cup finalist 1989

Certainly the finest footballer to come out of Iceland, together with Eyjolfur Sverrisson and Eidur Gudjohnsen. A central offensive midfielder who joined Bayern in 1981 but rarely played as he couldn't get past Paul Breitner, Sigurvinsson hit the big time playing for VfB Stuttgart between 1982 and 1990. A superb technical player who played very good diagonal passes and who would score himself oftentimes, but not a playmaker who would dictate the rhythm of a game. Before he came to play in Germany, Sigurvinsson had spent eight successful seasons in Belgium playing for Standard Liège.

League record

1971-72	14	5	Vestmannaeyja (Iceland)
1972-73	7	2	Vestmannaeyja (Iceland)
1973-74	20	5	Standard Liège (Belgium)
1974-75	35	3	Standard Liège (Belgium)
1975-76	34	11	Standard Liège (Belgium)
1976-77	31	5	Standard Liège (Belgium)
1977-78	31	6	Standard Liège (Belgium)
1978-79	34	8	Standard Liège (Belgium)
1979-80	33	11	Standard Liège (Belgium)
1980-81	31	8	Standard Liège (Belgium)
1981-82	17	1	Bayern München (BL)
1982-83	23	4	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1983-84	31	12	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1984-85	16	3	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1985-86	32	9	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1986-87	25	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1987-88	16	5	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1988-89	28	3	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1989-90	23	1	VfB Stuttgart (BL)

#18



Erich (Ete) BEER (b. 1946)
24 A (7 goals), Germany, Central Midfielder
League runner-up 1975
Cup finalist 1977, 1979
Euro finalist 1976

A playmaker whose unusual attribute was his high work ethic, very industrious and a capable tackler who possessed a hard-hitting shot which made him a frequent scorer of goals. What he lacked to become a great international player was pace and a really good technique. His peak years were between 1975 and 1978 when he was a starting player for the German national team.

League record

1968-69	25	2	Nürnberg (BL)
1969-70	32	8	RW Essen (BL)
1970-71	31	2	RW Essen (BL)
1971-72	31	8	Hertha BSC (BL)
1972-73	30	10	Hertha BSC (BL)
1973-74	33	9	Hertha BSC (BL)
1974-75	32	11	Hertha BSC (BL)
1975-76	34	23	Hertha BSC (BL)
1976-77	31	5	Hertha BSC (BL)
1977-78	33	5	Hertha BSC (BL)
1978-79	29	12	Hertha BSC (BL)
1979-80	-	-	Al-Ittihad (Saudi Arabia)
1980-81	-	-	Al-Ittihad (Saudi Arabia)
1981-82	30	9	TSV 1860 München (2. Div.)

#17



Alfred (Aki) SCHMIDT (1935-2016)
25 A (8 goals), Germany, Inside Right/Right Half
League champion 1957, 1963
League runner-up 1961, 1966
Cup winner 1965
Cup finalist 1963
CWC winner 1966

Aki Schmidt was a multi-faceted midfielder who performed exceptionally well either as inside right or as right half. His strengths were to be found in the offensive though, this is the role he is mostly remembered for and also his main task when playing for Germany. Known as an industrious all-rounder, Schmidt was a technically sound player whose goalscoring was a bit lacking. Schmidt was rated among Germany's best midfielders during his best years between 1957 and 1964 and was ever-present in the national team during these years.

League record

1956-57	28	13	Dortmund (Div. 1 – West)
1957-58	30	7	Dortmund (Div. 1 – West)
1958-59	28	12	Dortmund (Div. 1 – West)
1959-60	26	7	Dortmund (Div. 1 – West)
1960-61	25	1	Dortmund (Div. 1 – West)
1961-62	29	10	Dortmund (Div. 1 – West)
1962-63	28	7	Dortmund (Div. 1 – West)
1963-64	26	5	Dortmund (BL)
1964-65	24	5	Dortmund (BL)
1965-66	25	7	Dortmund (BL)
1966-67	6	2	Dortmund (BL)



Hans-Peter (Hansi) MÜLLER (b. 1957)

42 A (5 goals), Germany, Left Wing/Offensive Midfielder

League champion 1989, 1990

League runner-up 1979

Cup winner 1989

Cup finalist 1987, 1988

Euro winner 1980

World Cup finalist 1982

Perhaps the most classic example of the ‘eternal talent’ that never really managed to break through to the highest level. A player with an almost perfect ball control in his left foot who could play gorgeous passes, lethal at freekicks and who was also highly dangerous in open play due to his outstanding shooting technique. What he lacked was pace, he had weaknesses in covering ground which led him to indulge in dribblings deep in midfield which often made him lose possession in dangerous areas. Admittedly, things weren’t helped by the ‘special markers’ which were often assigned to playmakers in those days who were usually following every step of a player like him. If he had been more adept at quick short passing, Hansi Müller could have been a player comparable to Xavi of today. As it was, Müller remained an unfinished player who never became the great playmaker of the national team as so many had hoped and who only managed a handful of good games for Germany.

League record

1975-76	12	3	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 2)
1976-77	31	8	VfB Stuttgart (Div. 2)
1977-78	33	13	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1978-79	30	13	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1979-80	32	14	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1980-81	32	11	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1981-82	15	2	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1982-83	22	4	Inter (Italy)
1983-84	26	5	Inter (Italy)
1984-85	14	1	Como (Italy)
1985-86	33	16	Innsbruck (Austria)
1986-87	26	8	Innsbruck (Austria)
1987-88	15	6	Innsbruck (Austria)
1988-89	15	5	Innsbruck (Austria)
1989-90	14	0	Innsbruck (Austria)

#15



Krassimir BALAKOV

92 A (16 goals), Bulgaria, Offensive Midfielder

League champion 1991

League runner-up 1995, 2003

Cup winner 1995, 1997

Cup finalist 1994

CWC finalist 1998

Bulgarian Footballer 1995, 1997

The Bulgarian was a world class playmaker with a huge arsenal of abilities at his disposal. Playmaker and goalgetter all in one, an excellent freekick-taker, Balakov was the pivotal factor in the entertaining Stuttgart side of the mid-/late-1990s. During the second half of the 1990s Balakov was generally rated as the most complete and consistent midfielder of the Bundesliga. Exquisite at precision passing and a competent dribbler in the offensive half.

League record

1982-83	2	0	Etar (Bulgaria)
1983-84	17	2	Etar (Bulgaria)
1984-85	30	6	Etar (Bulgaria)
1985-86	5	3	Etar (Bulgaria)
1986-87	1	0	Etar (Bulgaria)
1987-88	18	2	Etar (Bulgaria)
1988-89	29	9	Etar (Bulgaria)
1989-90	30	10	Etar (Bulgaria)
1990-91	11	3	Etar (Bulgaria)
1990-91	18	4	Sporting Lisboa (Portugal)
1991-92	32	7	Sporting Lisboa (Portugal)
1992-93	32	12	Sporting Lisboa (Portugal)
1993-94	29	15	Sporting Lisboa (Portugal)
1994-95	27	6	Sporting Lisboa (Portugal)
1995-96	34	7	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1996-97	31	13	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1997-98	31	11	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1998-99	24	5	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
1999-00	30	6	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2000-01	28	6	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2001-02	30	4	VfB Stuttgart (BL)
2002-03	28	2	VfB Stuttgart (BL)



Heinz (Flocke) FLOHE (1948-2013)

39 A (8 goals), Germany, Left Midfielder

League Champion 1978

League runner-up 1973

Cup winner 1968, 1977, 1978

Cup finalist 1970, 1971, 1973

World Cup winner 1974

Euro finalist 1976

One of the technically most gifted midfielders of German football, like his teammate Wolfgang Overath he possessed a very strong left foot but had to play second fiddle to Overath for roughly ten years. After Overath's retirement in 1977 he played his strongest season, now equipped with all liberties that Overath had enjoyed previously, he blossomed and led Köln to their very last German championship in 1977-78. Flohe was always a touch more offensively-minded than Overath, with good stamina and a strong and precise shot, great at freekicks and high quality passing game. What he lacked was ruggedness, something his counterpart Overath had in abundance. In the national team he usually was counted as an "also-ran" before he was chosen by Helmut Schön to become Germany's playmaker in the 1978 World Cup. He actually did quite well in that tournament, definitely better than most of his teammates, but an injury in the game vs. Italy meant that the tournament was over for him before the crucial game vs. Austria. Carlos Babington, the Argentine midfielder who played in Germany during the time, compared him to Roberto Rivelino (in 1977). He had retired in 1980 after a broken leg was irreparably damaged.

League record

1966-67	18	2	Köln (BL)
1967-68	17	5	Köln (BL)
1968-69	14	2	Köln (BL)
1969-70	23	4	Köln (BL)
1970-71	32	3	Köln (BL)
1971-72	29	7	Köln (BL)
1972-73	30	8	Köln (BL)
1973-74	32	11	Köln (BL)
1974-75	28	7	Köln (BL)
1975-76	29	4	Köln (BL)
1976-77	30	7	Köln (BL)
1977-78	34	14	Köln (BL)
1978-79	13	3	Köln (BL)
1979-80	14	4	TSV 1860 München (BL)

#13



Olaf THON (b. 1966)

52 A (3 goals), Germany, Forward/Offensive Midfielder/Libero

League champion 1989, 1990, 1994

League runner-up 1991, 1993, 2001

Cup winner 2001, 2002

UEFA Cup 1997

World Cup winner 1990

World Cup finalist 1986

A fairly small, technically brilliant dribbler with an eye for the goal, very adept at quick little turns in tight spaces, which made him very dangerous around the box and although he was quite small, he was pretty good at heading. A gifted offensive midfielder who wrongfully was seen by many as a playmaker, which he wasn't. It is generally hard to classify Thon's position during his early years: Not a real centre forward but also not a real midfielder, more a cross between both types. He suffered a little from the outstanding start of his professional career in 1983-84 aged 17 playing for FC Schalke 04 in the second Division. He was an outright starter in his first season scoring 14 goals and was the main protagonist in the greatest ever German Cup game, the legendary 6-6 of FC Schalke 04 vs. Bayern München in the 1983-84 Cup semi final, where he scored three of Schalke's six goals, most importantly the 6-6 equalizer in the very last minute of extra-time. The fans and the media expected the greatest things of this 17 year old prodigy, which certainly was a big burden for the youngster. In the end, Thon managed a high-class professional career which lasted 19 years, but he would not be able to repeat the buzz he created at the age of 17. He did not become a global superstar as many had expected and after a few years was considered by many to be an unfinished talent. Thon joined Bayern München in 1988 and was reskilled as a creative, offensive Libero in late-1992. He did quite well in that unexpected role due to his splendid positioning, his skills at distributing and his solid heading ability.

League record

1983-84	38	14	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 2)
1984-85	34	10	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1985-86	34	10	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1986-87	33	8	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1987-88	28	14	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
1988-89	32	8	Bayern München (BL)
1989-90	20	8	Bayern München (BL)
1990-91	25	6	Bayern München (BL)
1991-92	24	2	Bayern München (BL)
1992-93	32	5	Bayern München (BL)
1993-94	15	1	Bayern München (BL)
1994-95	26	1	FC Schalke04 (BL)
1995-96	30	3	FC Schalke04 (BL)
1996-97	33	2	FC Schalke04 (BL)
1997-98	29	1	FC Schalke04 (BL)
1998-99	16	2	FC Schalke04 (BL)
1999-00	23	1	FC Schalke04 (BL)
2000-01	4	0	FC Schalke04 (BL)
2002-03	5	0	FC Schalke04 (BL)

#12



Uwe BEIN (b. 1960)
17 A (3 goals), Germany, Offensive Midfielder
UEFA Cup finalist 1986
World Cup winner 1990

In German football, Uwe Bein's through balls are regarded as the culmination of this fine art of playmaking. His sense for the perfect and ideal lowpass into the gap of a defense was unrivalled in German football. What he lacked was consistency, a more commanding presence and pace. When he was feeling well, he was a playmaker who saw his main function as a provider, not as someone who would marshal his team. When he was entering the box he was also an able finisher. Of course a player like him also was a keen and able freekick-taker. As a player he was a bit dreamy and quite dependant on his mood.

League record

1979-80	9	1	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1980-81	38	25	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1981-82	35	12	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1982-83	37	20	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1983-84	34	14	Kickers Offenbach (Div. 2)
1984-85	27	8	Köln (BL)
1985-86	20	5	Köln (BL)
1986-87	17	4	Köln (BL)
1987-88	24	7	Hamburg (BL)
1988-89	28	15	Hamburg (BL)
1989-90	33	9	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1990-91	31	8	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1991-92	34	8	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1992-93	25	7	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1993-94	27	6	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1993-94	10	2	Urawa (Japan)
1994-95	38	18	Urawa (Japan)
1995-96	20	5	Urawa (Japan)



Wolfgang-Felix MAGATH (b. 1953)
 43 A (3 goals), Germany, Offensive Midfielder
 League champion 1979, 1982, 1983
 League runner-up 1980, 1981, 1984
 Champions Cup 1983
 Champions Cup finalist 1980
 CWC winner 1977
 UEFA Cup finalist 1982
 Euro winner 1980
 World Cup finalist 1982, 1986

A technically extraordinary midfielder who could dictate the rhythm of a game with his high intelligence. Known for his cultured short passing and very good long passing, Magath at times resembled a classic playmaker but did not really embrace that role as he preferred to operate on the left side of midfield and not in a central position. What he definitely lacked was good pace. Great ball control in tight spaces but not a player who would cover a lot of ground. Could be quite dangerous with his left foot. Magath was astute at sensing the rhythm and the structure of a game but lacked a certain punch.

League record

1974-75	38	12	Saarbrücken (Div. 2)
1975-76	38	17	Saarbrücken (Div. 2)
1976-77	30	1	Hamburg (BL)
1977-78	33	4	Hamburg (BL)
1978-79	21	4	Hamburg (BL)
1979-80	32	5	Hamburg (BL)
1980-81	33	10	Hamburg (BL)
1981-82	28	8	Hamburg (BL)
1982-83	34	4	Hamburg (BL)
1983-84	34	5	Hamburg (BL)
1984-85	32	3	Hamburg (BL)
1985-86	29	2	Hamburg (BL)



Mesut ÖZIL (b. 1988)

83 A (21 goals), Germany, Offensive Midfielder/Left Wing

League champion 2012

League runner-up 2007, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2016

Cup winner 2009, 2011, 2014, 2015, 2017

Cup finalist 2010, 2013

Champions Cup 2014

World Cup winner 2014

Mesut Özil's reputation is that of a player of tremendous possibilities who so far has not fully played to his potential and who is quite erratic in his level. And when he does play to his potential, it is mostly not for a long enough period. His body language often signs lethargy when his team really needs him the most. Thus despite his great inventiveness, his good eye and vision and his outstanding ball control, and despite his shiny trophy room, Özil might be remembered as a player that could have been even better than he was. His intuition and technique are outstanding, he is a world class assister but himself lacks a goalscoring punch.

His passing is inch-perfect, when in possession, he exudes that touch of ingeniousness of the really great playmakers of old. Özil is painted with the brush of being a player of low workrate and a general slowness, a player that likes to dwell on the ball endlessly. In truth, Özil is a good workhorse, his distance covered is at least 10 km, even above 11 km many times and his top speed is quite good, too. Özil has good running stats (distance, top speed, sprint) yet only few people access this data, so the German and British media created the 'lazy Özil' myth. Many British pundits and journalists criticize Özil's attitude and praise Alexis Sanchez, yet actually Sanchez has worse running stats than Özil. A justified criticism is that he could be expected to simply score more goals than he does in the position he is playing.

League record

2006-07	19	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2007-08	11	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2007-08	12	1	Bremen (BL)
2008-09	28	3	Bremen (BL)
2009-10	31	9	Bremen (BL)
2010-11	36	6	Real Madrid (Spain)
2011-12	35	4	Real Madrid (Spain)
2012-13	32	9	Real Madrid (Spain)
2013-14	2	0	Real Madrid (Spain)
2013-14	26	5	Arsenal (England)
2014-15	22	4	Arsenal (England)
2015-16	35	6	Arsenal (England)
2016-17	33	8	Arsenal (England)



Andreas (Andi) MÖLLER (b. 1967)
85 (29 goals), Germany, Offensive Midfielder
League champion 1995, 1996
League runner-up 1994, 2001
Cup winner 1988, 1989, 2001, 2002
Champions Cup 1997
UEFA Cup 1993
Intercontinental Cup 1997
World Cup winner 1990
Euro winner 1996
Euro finalist 1992

One of the Bundesliga's most lightfooted offensive midfielders, a high-tempo dribbler of a certain elegance and a very fast acceleration who didn't lose speed with the ball at his feet and who was known to score wonderful goals after his explosive solos. Playing in central midfield, Möller possessed strategic qualities, too, but didn't feel at home in the role of a playmaker who showed others the way. Not a hard character at all, Möller would easily get weepy when he was hit by fouls. Unfortunately prone to diving, Möller's club career slightly outweighed his international career.

League record

1985-86	1	0	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1986-87	22	1	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1987-88	12	4	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1987-88	14	3	Dortmund (BL)
1988-89	29	11	Dortmund (BL)
1989-90	32	10	Dortmund (BL)
1990-91	32	16	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1991-92	37	12	Eintracht Frankfurt (BL)
1992-93	26	10	Juventus (Italy)
1993-94	30	9	Juventus (Italy)
1994-95	30	14	Dortmund (BL)
1995-96	23	8	Dortmund (BL)
1996-97	26	5	Dortmund (BL)
1997-98	26	10	Dortmund (BL)
1998-99	30	7	Dortmund (BL)
1999-00	18	3	Dortmund (BL)
2000-01	32	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2001-02	32	4	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2002-03	22	1	FC Schalke 04 (BL)
2003-04	11	0	FC Schalke 04 (BL)



Ernst (Clemens) KUZORRA (1905-1990)

12 A (7 goals), Germany, Inside Left

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

League runner-up 1933, 1938, 1941

Cup winner 1937

Cup finalist 1935, 1936, 1941, 1942

Together with his brother-in-law Fritz Szepan, Ernst 'Clemens' Kuzorra to this day embodies one of Germany's all-time most popular clubs, FC Schalke 04. The "myth" FC Schalke is inseparably linked to the names Szepan and Kuzorra. Son of a miner and a miner himself, Kuzorra debuted in the first team on 22 April 1923 at the age of 17. Soon he established himself in the inside left position, a role he would stick to for the next 26 years. Kuzorra was equally powerful and technical and was feared for his tremendous shot. Together with Szepan, he was the centrepiece of the famous "Kreisel" short passing game that was perfected by the 1930s and which helped Schalke conquer all of German football in so dominant a manner that it would have been deemed impossible just a few years earlier. The "Schalker Kreisel" unsettled countless teams because the Schalke players were constantly moving around and addressing elaborate short passes in triangles in an artful manner. The final aim of the "Kreisel" was to set up the best shooter in the team.

Together with his passing skills, Kuzorra was also notable as a skilled and elegant dribbler who often completed his solos with a hard shot. Kuzorra's international exploits however would be nowhere near as impressive as his club exploits. The meagre number of just 12 caps for a player of his calibre was mostly due to two factors: In 1930 many Schalke players were involved in a "professionals affair" (accepting considerable amount of money for playing football) which was forbidden in Germany and which led to a one year suspension and secondly, Kuzorra did not have a good rapport with Reichstrainer Otto Nerz, as Kuzorra was used to act as a quasi-manager in his club Schalke and he intended to do the same in the national team.

The authoritarian Nerz would have none of that and thus Kuzorra's call ups in the national team were fairly infrequent. His most legendary game was the 1934 German championship final, when he kept playing on despite suffering a inguinal hernia. Not only did he keep a stiff upper lip, he also moments before the final whistle scored the game-deciding second goal for Schalke. Seconds after scoring he fainted and broke down. Kuzorra soldiered on during the 1940s when the great team was slowly fading away and continued to play a crucial role in the first 2-3 years of the Oberliga in the mid-/late-1940s. "The greatest footballer of his time" (according to Helmut Schön) finally officially retired together with Fritz Szepan on 12 November 1950 in a friendly game against Brazilian champions Cruzeiro Belo Horizonte.

Senior club

1923-33	-	-	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1933-34	-	13	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1934-35	-	5	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1935-36	23	26	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1936-37	21	20	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1937-38	26	26	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1938-39	23	13	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1939-40	18	15	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1940-41	24	16	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1941-42	17	14	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1942-43	19	12	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1943-44	14	11	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1944-45	4	5	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1945-47	-	-	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - West)
1947-48	14	1	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - West)
1948-49	4	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - West)
1949-50	0	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - West)



Helmut HALLER (1939-2012)

33 A (13 goals), Germany, Inside Right

League champion 1964, 1972, 1973

Cup finalist 1973

Champions Cup finalist 1973

Fairs Cup finalist 1971

World Cup finalist 1966

The temperamental and also a bit plaintive inside right already impressed at young age with his subtle ball control. Haller quickly gained a reputation as a cunning provider and an able finisher and became a celebrated star player in Serie A playing for Bologna and later Juventus before returning to his native Augsburg in 1973 where he continued to play until 1979, aged 39. His best year for Germany turned out to be 1966 when he impressively confirmed in the World Cup his reputation as a cunning provider and goalgetter, scoring no less than 6 goals as a midfielder. When Haller debuted in the national team after the 1958 World Cup he took over the role of the great Fritz Walter. Throughout his career Haller fought against overweight and by 1970 it looked as if he had lost that fight for good. He looked out of shape and out of form when he performed in Germany's first game against Morocco in Mexico '70. Consequently he was substituted at half-time and would never return to the national team afterwards. Despite his poor showing he proved to be still valuable for Juventus in the following three years, also due to successfully fighting his weight problems, apparently he was very motivated by the way he was ousted from the German team in 1970. Haller was always the player who relied massively on his technical skills and tried to avoid lots of running if possible.

League record

1956-57	-	31	Augsburg (Div. 2)
1957-58	30	5	Augsburg (Div. 1 – South)
1958-59	29	9	Augsburg (Div. 1 – South)
1959-60	-	-	Augsburg (Div. 2)
1960-61	-	-	Augsburg (Div. 2)
1961-62	26	19	Augsburg (Div. 1 – South)
1962-63	34	8	Bologna (Italy)
1963-64	37	7	Bologna (Italy)
1964-65	30	11	Bologna (Italy)
1965-66	31	12	Bologna (Italy)
1966-67	29	9	Bologna (Italy)
1967-68	21	1	Bologna (Italy)
1968-69	25	6	Juventus (Italy)
1969-70	27	3	Juventus (Italy)
1970-71	23	5	Juventus (Italy)
1971-72	23	5	Juventus (Italy)
1972-73	18	2	Juventus (Italy)
1973-74	32	10	Augsburg (Div. 2)
1974-75	29	9	Augsburg (Div. 2)
1975-76	16	3	Augsburg (Div. 2)
1976-77	2	0	Schwenningen (Div. 2)
1977-78	-	-	Schwenningen (Div. 3)
1978-79	15	2	Augsburg (Div. 2)



Michael BALLACK (b. 1976)

98 A (42 goals), Germany, Central Midfielder

League champion 1998, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010

League runner-up 2000, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008

Cup winner 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010

Cup finalist 2002

Champions Cup finalist 2002, 2008

World Cup finalist 2002

German Footballer 2002, 2003, 2005

An incredibly athletic and strong-willed central midfielder who reached a world class level as both an offensive and defensive midfielder. Characterised by great diligence, power and goal threat, Ballack was a midfielder who didn't always look smooth or elegant when he was roaming the midfield like a tank, powering his way into the box or heading balls with the power of a bombshell. In all Ballack did, he was highly efficient and a real leader on the pitch. Ballack was towering head and shoulders above all other German players of his generation. His misfortune was that he was the only clear-cut German world class player of his generation and thus an incredible weight was on his shoulders as he had to carry his team almost alone. The generations before and after Ballack were far more populated by high-class players and the weight was distributed on many capable shoulders.

Among the best offensive midfielders Germany had to offer, Ballack was possibly the most capable in defense as he was plotting his offensive endeavours always with a defensive mindset. It has thus always been a matter of taste whether one should classify Ballack as a predominantly offensive or a predominantly defensive player. At his peak, he was one of the most productive midfielders and thus he would not be out of place in this ranking of offensive midfielders. Even when he was positioned behind the strikers, Ballack was still conducting the defense because he was initiating many offensive actions with his strength in one-on-one duels in a withdrawn central position. Ballack liked to drop back frequently in order to get more time on the ball and to dodge being marked too closely. When in possession, he would quickly advance upfield, looking for passing options and for a finish. His abilities were also more suited to that of an offensive midfielder, not to that of a bonafide defensive midfielder, as his defensive sensibilities were not as refined as his offensive ones. His positioning in a defensive position was not as good as that of others and also his pace could have been better. Thus Ballack often had to resort to hard tackling or out-and-out rough foul play to solve defensive situations. Of all great German footballers, none had to face a situation like Ballack. Because Ballack was in such an outstanding position in German football during his time, the scrutiny he met from the media and many fans was exorbitant and often far too unfair. Somewhat disappointing was his time playing for Chelsea.

There, he ended up as the defensive shield covering for main man and club icon Frank Lampard. Few touches on the ball and even less impetus in a position that is one of the most important ones. Ballack never was near the very top of the Chelsea hierarchy, although there was some hope in spring 2008, when he had is best phase while playing in England and even captained his team for a while. But on the whole, Ballack remained quite anonymous in London. When there was a freekick, it was the turn of Lampard and Drogba, Ballack got a try at a freekick may one time out of ten. The team was tailor-made to suit Frank Lampard. Thus Ballack's club career ended on a sour note (his last stop in Leverkusen was wholly unremarkable) but fits well into the overall picture of Ballack's career: a supremely talented player who was very close several times of winning the biggest trophies in world football but in the end he ended up with only a fragmentary trophy cabinet.

League record

1995-96	15	0	Chemnitz (Div. 2)
1996-97	34	10	Chemnitz (Div. 3)
1997-98	16	0	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)
1998-99	30	4	1. FC Kaiserslautern (BL)

1999-00	23	3	Leverkusen (BL)
2000-01	27	7	Leverkusen (BL)
2001-02	29	17	Leverkusen (BL)
2002-03	26	10	Bayern München (BL)
2003-04	28	7	Bayern München (BL)
2004-05	27	13	Bayern München (BL)
2005-06	26	14	Bayern München (BL)
2006-07	26	4	Chelsea (England)
2007-08	18	7	Chelsea (England)
2008-09	29	1	Chelsea (England)
2009-10	32	4	Chelsea (England)
2010-11	17	0	Leverkusen (BL)
2011-12	18	2	Leverkusen (BL)



Friedrich (Fritz) SZEPAN (1907-1974)

34 A (8 goals), Germany, Inside Right/Centre-Half

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

League runner-up 1933, 1938, 1941

Cup winner 1937

Cup finalist 1935, 1936, 1941, 1942

Top Scorer Championship 1942

Simply one of the great legends of German football. His name, together with that of Ernst Kuzorra, is synonymous with the great Schalke era of the 1930s and early-1940s. Szepan started out at inside right but gained international recognition in his interpretation of the centre half role during the mid-1930s. He was not an easy-going player and declared his retirement from international play more than once. Szepan had a comeback in late-1936, playing at inside left. His displays again reached the high level of his 1934 World Cup performance and by 1937 Szepan was the outstanding playmaker of the famous Breslau XI. Szepan and Kuzorra were at the heart of the "Schalker Kreisel", the whirling of quick short passes between constantly moving teammates with the aim of setting up the best shooter of the team.

On the ball he proved to be exceptionally gifted, a perfect technical player with a great tactical mind on top of it. In 1931 Otto Nerz, the Reichstrainer, dismissed Szepan as unemployable for the national team as he claimed Szepan was too slow. It was only with sights set on the 1934 World Cup that Nerz reconsidered this and made Szepan return to the national team. Schalke had become one of the major teams at that time but Nerz had other plans with Szepan than to use him in his natural position as an inside forward which he had mastered so well in his club. Possibly because he still thought Szepan was too slow, Nerz decided to withdraw him to the centre-half role of his WM-system, basically meaning that Szepan was tasked to cover the opposing centre forward and hence giving him a clearly defensive role, that of the newly emerging stopper.

What came as a total surprise was, that the contrarian Szepan silently accepted this "degradation" and closely stuck to Nerz's tactical order ("do not cross the halfway line!"). He addressed himself to the unattractive task of marking another player very well. Later on in the 1934 World Cup, Szepan was allowed to act more offensively and Szepan exploited this rather well, reminding many observers that of the great centre-halves of the old pyramid system who served as focal points of their teams, both as defensive anchor and as offensive playmaker. Although Szepan also adopted the role of defensive-minded stopper in his club Schalke for a while, in the long run it was obvious that a player of Szepan's calibre was more useful as an inside forward and thus the 1934 World Cup was the only time that Szepan actually played stopper in the national team.

Otto Nerz decided that he wanted the stopper to be mainly a defensive part and deployed "destroyer" types like Ludwig Goldbrunner, Reinhold Mützenberg or Bubi Sold as stopper. In the following years, Szepan was at the helm of his team as conductor and goalgetter. His greatest moment in the national team came in 1937 when he was the mind behind the famous "Breslau Eleven", which was rated as the best German national team until the 1972 European champions came along. Together with his brother-in-law and good mate Ernst Kuzorra, Szepan remained a fixture in the Schalke team until the mid-1940s, he finally retired as a bonafide football legend in November 1950 together with Ernst Kuzorra.

League record

1923-33 - - FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)

1933-34 - 4 FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)

1934-35 - 4 FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)

1935-36 23 11 FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)

1936-37 22 21 FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)

1937-38 18 11 FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)

1938-39	24	15	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1939-40	25	21	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1940-41	25	17	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1941-42	21	20	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1942-43	15	17	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1943-44	7	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1944-45	0	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 - Westphalia)
1945-46	-	-	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)
1946-47	-	-	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)
1947-48	6	1	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)
1948-49	4	0	FC Schalke 04 (Div. 1 – West)



Bernd SCHUSTER (b. 1959)

21 A (4 goals), Germany, Central Midfielder

League champion 1985, 1989, 1990

League runner-up 1982, 1986, 1987, 1991

Cup winner 1981, 1983, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992

CWC winner 1982

Cup finalist 1984, 1986, 1990

Champions Cup finalist 1986

Euro winner 1980

Bernd Schuster was a highly-gifted playmaker who joined Köln 1978 at the age of 18 looking like a long-term replacement of Wolfgang Overath who had retired the previous year. During his debut season, Schuster however had to be content with being deployed in defensive roles, even that of a stopper during the second half of the 1978-79 season. Already as a young professional, Schuster possessed exceptional skills: an immense feeling for well-weighted long passes, wonderful diagonal passes spanning 40 meters, an excellent shot, great direct freekicks but most of all a compelling dominance on the pitch. Schuster always exuded great drawing power, teammates were looking to pass the ball to him and he was always positioned so that he could receive the ball at all times, and when in possession, he would cross the pitch covering a lot of ground.

After joining Barcelona in 1980, he was afflicted by a vicious foul of Andoni Goikoetxea in 1982 and never fully recovered afterwards. He was not able to reach the absolute same class of early years after that incident. A difficult character, Schuster was never known to hesitate when a confrontation was looming and he would never back down. Often he had fallen out with his managers which once even led to him not playing a single game during a full season (1986-87). Due to his argumentative nature, his international career for Germany was also cut short, but this time it was Schuster himself who decided not to play for Germany for good in 1984, shortly before the European Championships. Franz Beckenbauer tried to persuade Schuster to return in 1985, but Beckenbauer was appalled when Schuster demanded a payment of 1 million marks for his services.

League record

1978-79	24	1	Köln (BL)
1979-80	32	9	Köln (BL)
1980-81	5	0	Köln (BL)
1980-81	23	11	Barcelona (Spain)
1981-82	13	8	Barcelona (Spain)
1982-83	28	7	Barcelona (Spain)
1983-84	22	7	Barcelona (Spain)
1984-85	32	11	Barcelona (Spain)
1985-86	22	10	Barcelona (Spain)
1986-87	0	0	Barcelona (Spain)
1987-88	30	9	Barcelona (Spain)
1988-89	33	7	Real Madrid (Spain)
1989-90	28	6	Real Madrid (Spain)
1990-91	29	4	Atletico Madrid (Spain)
1991-92	34	6	Atletico Madrid (Spain)
1992-93	22	1	Atletico Madrid (Spain)
1993-94	28	5	Leverkusen (BL)
1994-95	23	2	Leverkusen (BL)
1995-96	8	1	Leverkusen (BL)
1996-97	9	0	UNAM Pumas (Mexico)

#3



Paul BREITNER (b. 1951)

48 A (10 goals), Germany, Left Back/Offensive Midfielder

League champion 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1980, 1981

League runner-up 1971

Cup winner 1971, 1975, 1982

German Footballer 1981

World Cup winner 1974

World Cup finalist 1982

Euro winner 1972

See biography #2 left back

League record

1970-71	21	2	Bayern München (BL)
1971-72	30	4	Bayern München (BL)
1972-73	32	4	Bayern München (BL)
1973-74	26	7	Bayern München (BL)
1974-75	29	3	Real Madrid (Spain)
1975-76	25	6	Real Madrid (Spain)
1976-77	30	1	Real Madrid (Spain)
1977-78	30	10	Braunschweig (BL)
1978-79	33	12	Bayern München (BL)
1979-80	32	10	Bayern München (BL)
1980-81	30	17	Bayern München (BL)
1981-82	29	18	Bayern München (BL)
1982-83	22	9	Bayern München (BL)

#2



Günter NETZER (b. 1944)
37 A (6 goals), Germany, Offensive Midfielder
League champion 1970, 1971, 1975, 1976, 1978
Cup winner 1973, 1974, 1975
Cup finalist 1978
German Footballer 1972, 1973
UEFA Cup finalist 1973
World Cup winner 1974
Euro winner 1972

One of the great legends of 1970s football, Netzer was not only one of the best ever playmakers in world football but arguably the most charismatic player ever to come out of Germany. His one phenomenal gift were his long passes which he would spray “from the depth of space” and his affectionately celebrated set-pieces. His chipped freekicks were pure eye candy. With his space-consuming footsteps he could quickly cover a lot of ground coming from deep of his own half. One of the best football strategists, he was a superb conductor of the pace of a game. Not known for a fast acceleration, he would accelerate the game instead. His ball control was wonderful and his shooting technique sophisticated. In his club Mönchengladbach the very self-confident Netzer was naturally at the absolute center of all things, on and off the pitch.

But even the greatest do have weaknesses. He would react sensitively to hard tackling and foul play. Considering himself as a free thinker, Netzer was not known to indulge into too much defensive work, he preferred to have ‘workers’ around him that would present him the ball on a plate. Netzer and his almost equally legendary manager at Mönchengladbach, Hennes Weisweiler, were known to share a ‘love-hate’ relationship. Interestingly, much of the quarrel between the two stemmed from Netzer wanting to play less offensive, with more focus on defense while Weisweiler was an advocate of trying to annihilate opponents by an assault of total attacking football.

One of the longest-going subjects of debate in the German football community in those years was the question: Netzer or Overath? The Köln playmaker had the same talent as Netzer but was more combative, more tactically disciplined, had a stronger will and unlike Netzer did not think himself too good for committing to defensive work. Also, Overath could function in any team while Netzer needed his familiar environment to fully reach his potential. Thus Overath for years was doing much better for Germany than Netzer. It wasn’t until 1971 that Netzer finally managed a breakthrough in the national team, with Mönchengladbach having become the first Bundesliga team to win back-to-back championships, naturally the number of Gladbach players that were called up increased considerably and thus Netzer felt more at home in the national team than in previous years.

At the same time Overath’s form dropped and he also started to get injured more often. And thus it came to pass that Günter Netzer would become the player most associated with arguably the finest ever German national team, the 1972 European Championship winners. But for becoming one of the all-time greatest players in world football, Netzer would have needed to sustain that level for a bit longer than two years, which he didn’t. By 1973 the Netzer grandeur of 1971 and 1972 had vanished, which can be attributed to picking up nagging injuries and his joining of Real Madrid in the summer of 1973, which severely hampered his chances to remain at the center of Germany’s football national team. Also he was nearing 30 at that time and in the end it must be said that it took Netzer just a little too long to take on the football world and when he finally reached the summit he was already on the fall again.

League record

1963-64	35	9	Bor. Mönchengladbach (Div. 2)
1964-65	32	17	Bor. Mönchengladbach (Div. 2)
1965-66	31	13	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)

1966-67	31	11	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1967-68	34	13	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1968-69	27	10	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1969-70	29	6	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1970-71	32	9	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1971-72	28	17	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1972-73	18	3	Bor. Mönchengladbach (BL)
1973-74	25	0	Real Madrid (Spain)
1974-75	31	7	Real Madrid (Spain)
1975-76	29	2	Real Madrid (Spain)
1976-77	26	3	Grashoppers (Switzerland)
1977-78	0	0	Grashoppers (Switzerland)



Wolfgang OVERATH (b. 1943)

81 A (17 goals), Germany, Inside Left/Offensive Midfielder

League champion 1964

League runner-up 1965, 1973

Cup winner 1968, 1977

Cup finalist 1970, 1971, 1973

World Cup winner 1974

World Cup finalist 1966

Together with Günter Netzer the epitome of the classic 1970s playmaker. Overath was a great orchestrator with supreme ball control, great vision and way of dictating the rhythm of a game. Stopping the ball, processing it and passing it on within seconds was done in one quick harmonic move. Overath mastered all forms of passing, was renowned for his long precise passes, often delivered with the outside of his left foot. He could dribble in tight spaces and had a good shot but unlike Netzer, Overath did not look to score many goals himself. What mostly set him apart from Netzer though was his aggression and willingness to commit himself when out of possession. Often Overath would successfully seize the ball himself and he also possessed a high workrate unlike many other playmakers of his time.

In defensive one-on-one situations, Overath was one of the best offensive midfielders around, for Overath due to his very hot temper couldn't stand not having the ball at his feet and thus he was eager to get it which might explain his aggressive mentality. A trait that made him turn his fury also on his teammates if they didn't pass the ball to him. Often he was seen gesticulating in dismay when he was overlooked. Thus it is not exaggerated to call him a difficult character to have on the team. Obviously a type of character like Overath was in total command of his team, always at the center of all offensive actions. It was different in the national team where Overath was content in taking a back seat to Franz Beckenbauer. Overath was stuck in the role as 'second boss' throughout his international career but apparently he had no problems with that.

Overath's best international performance was in the 1970 World Cup. Here's an excerpt of media quotes from South America after that tournament: 'We knew that Beckenbauer is a great, elegant football player, we knew that Müller was a dangerous goalgetter, but that Wolfgang Overath was capable of such miracles was new to us' (Francisco Larrea of a Uruguayan newspaper). "Virtually a very special football treat was the playing of Overath against Italy. He should have earned a gold medal for his performance. The German is a footballer through and through. He has the grace of a ballerina, the endurance of a space traveler, the intelligence of an Einstein and the footballing qualities of, well, what can we say, let us use the biggest superlative there is - that of an Overath' (Joao Saldanha of Journal de Deportes). 'Overath is the best midfield player who I have ever seen. His passes over 30, even 40 meters were inch-perfect, the interplay with his teammates worked almost blind, his through balls into the gaps testified his great overview and intelligence' (Silvio Marzolini in 'Comercio'). 'We know that Germany had a star in Beckenbauer, but Overath was the real discovery of this World Cup to us' (Farfan for the Peruvian paper 'Ra'). 'Name me one better midfielder and I pay you 1000 Pesos. Overath was the decisive stimulus of the German team. He distinguished himself mostly because with simple measures he achieved the maximum output of productivity. He solely plays for his team and not for the crowds. This makes him twice as sympathetic' (Ramon Mifflin).

League record

1962-63	0	0	Köln (Div. 1 – West) (suspended)
1963-64	30	9	Köln (BL)
1964-65	27	9	Köln (BL)
1965-66	30	3	Köln (BL)
1966-67	33	6	Köln (BL)
1967-68	29	9	Köln (BL)
1968-69	34	6	Köln (BL)

1969-70	29	12	Köln (BL)
1970-71	26	4	Köln (BL)
1971-72	25	6	Köln (BL)
1972-73	30	3	Köln (BL)
1973-74	31	5	Köln (BL)
1974-75	34	4	Köln (BL)
1975-76	27	2	Köln (BL)
1976-77	24	6	Köln (BL)