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## 50 Years of the Bundesliga **HD**

The year 1963 marked a turning point in German soccer. Instead of regional leagues producing winners that went on to compete for the title of overall German champion, the best teams now battled it out for titles in a national league: The Bundesliga was born. After five decades of gripping sporting action, legendary matches and the rise of many a star and club, the Bundesliga has established itself as one of Europe's most important soccer leagues enthraling millions of fans all over the world.

### **01 The 1960s: "When the league learned to walk"**

The first ever Bundesliga goal was scored on 24 August 1963: It put Borussia Dortmund one goal up against Werder Bremen. But it came in the first minute of a match that had been started too soon. The moment was not captured on camera – a black hole at the very beginning of Bundesliga history. It was, however, witnessed by Gerd Kolbe, who later became Dortmund's media spokesman. A figure that defined the first Bundesliga decade was the legendary Uwe Seeler. Both men air their views on the founding of the league and the professionalisation of the sport.

### **02 The 1970s: "Of gold-diggers and rebels"**

The second Bundesliga decade began with a scandal: Matches were bought – for sums that would today be considered paltry. The league bounced back from the shock in breath-taking fashion. Its development was marked by the battle between Borussia Mönchengladbach and Bayern Munich. Players from both clubs became European champions in 1972 and world champions in 1974. In their search for individual freedom, they also broke down hidebound structures in the game. Sepp Maier, Rainer Bonhof and Klaus Fischer talk about their "golden decade".

### **03 The 1980s: "Hard, but with a heart"**

The Bundesliga was now well-established and had matured. The head-to-head at the top of the league continued, but with new protagonists: Bayern Munich was still there but battling it out against clubs from the north of Germany: first Hamburg, then Werder Bremen. Two top strikers from the 1980s, Dieter Hoeness and Horst Hrubesch, recall tough coaches and opponents, unforgiving match play and the human face of league business. They deliver a personal appraisal of a successful decade.

### **04 The 1990s: "New country, new game"**

German reunification in 1990 also signified the merging of German soccer. Players from the former East Germany such as Steffen Freund changed the nature of the Bundesliga. But the game still clung to old pitch strategies. Volker Finke was one of the first coaches to allow his team to play an innovative short passing game, thereby earning great admiration for his club Freiburg. Bayern Munich still dominated the top of the league, but with another new rival: Borussia Dortmund. Lothar Matthäus looks back on some of the toughest duels.

### **05 The New Millenium: "Less time, more pace"**

The pace picked up sharply at the start of the new millennium, and not just in soccer: Greater performance was required at ever higher speed. A person can only be successful if he is fast, thinks on his feet and plays a nifty game without wasting a second. Jürgen Klopp und Michael Ballack talk about acceleration in society, media madness, new impulses in German soccer and social development within the Bundesliga itself.

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