Five new faces to watch in the Bundesliga this season

AFP- Leverkusen’s unbeaten league and cup double stung perennial champions Bayern Munich, who have again been Germany’s big spenders as they look to return to the summit.

Champions League finalists Borussia Dortmund, along with RB Leipzig and Stuttgart, have also strengthened.

Here, AFP Sport looks at five new faces to watch in the Bundesliga this season:

Michael Olise (Bayern Munich)

The Bundesliga’s most expensive new addition at a reported 53 million euros ($59 million), new Bayern forward Olise offers speed on the flanks and a consistent goal threat.

The 22-year-old impressed with 10 Premier League goals and six assists in 19 appearances for Crystal Palace last season.

The London-born Olise won a silver medal with France at the Paris Olympics and is expected to soon receive a maiden call-up from first-team coach Didier Deschamps.

Olise arrived in Munich this summer alongside Portugal midfielder Joao Palhinha and defender Hiroki Ito.

Pascal Gross (Borussia Dortmund)



Pascal Gross laid on two assists on his Dortmund debut © Ina FASSBENDER / AFP/File

The arrival of 33-year-old Gross may seem unusual for a club known for signing promising young talents, but the Germany midfielder may be exactly what Borussia Dortmund need this season.

Dortmund have boasted some of the best young talents in the game in recent years, but have lacked creativity and maturity in the middle of the park.

A midfielder with an eye for goal, Gross joins Dortmund after seven years with Brighton, where he was twice named the Premier League club’s player of the season.

A childhood Dortmund fan, Gross made his Germany debut at the age of 32 and was part of coach Julian Nagelsmann’s squad at Euro 2024.

Gross wasted no time fitting in, with two first-half assists as Dortmund beat Phoenix Luebeck 4-1 in their German Cup opener.

Aleix Garcia (Bayer Leverkusen)



Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Aleix Garcia lifts the German Super Cup © Sascha Schuermann / AFP/File

Not only have Leverkusen held onto the players who led them to their first Bundesliga title, they have added Spain’s Garcia.

Garcia was the midfield maestro behind Girona’s surprise third-place finish in La Liga last season, and offers coach Xabi Alonso additional midfield security.

The 27-year-old captained Girona and despite being a defensive midfielder still contributed three goals and six assists in 37 games.

Garcia will also be able to take the pressure off midfield lynchpin Granit Xhaka, who played more minutes than any other outfield player for Leverkusen last season.

Deniz Undav (Stuttgart)



Stuttgart forward Deniz Undav joined on a permanent deal from Brighton in the summer © Sascha Schuermann / AFP/File

While technically not a new arrival – Undav spent last season at Stuttgart on loan – he signed a permanent deal with the club in the summer, moving from Brighton.

Undav was one of several players who excelled under Sebastian Hoeness last season as Stuttgart went from relegation battlers to a second-place finish, one spot higher than Bayern.

With Serhou Guirassy and Waldemar Anton departed to Dortmund and defender Ito to Bayern, Germany forward Undav will be even more crucial in Stuttgart’s return to the Champions League after a 14-year absence.

Undav has already impressed this season, scoring a goal just a minute after coming off the bench in Saturday’s Super Cup clash with Leverkusen.

While Stuttgart lost the game on penalties, Undav was named man of the match despite playing just 28 minutes.

Antonio Nusa (RB Leipzig)



Antonio Nusa joined RB Leipzig from Club Brugge in the summer © KURT DESPLENTER / Belga/AFP/File

Known for unearthing an array of future stars, RB Leipzig hope the arrival of Norway forward Nusa will offset the summer departure of Dani Olmo, who moved to Barcelona.

Nusa, 19, arrived in Leipzig from Club Brugge in August for a reported fee of 22 million euros – a year after a 37-million-euro switch to Premier League side Brentford broke down.

The winger scored on debut in Leipzig's 4-1 opening-round German Cup win over Essen.

"I know that Dani Olmo was a really great player at the club. I want to fill those gaps and shine in my own way," he said.