



GERMAN LICENSED FOOTBALL

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Foreword by the Speaker of the DFL Executive Committee

Dear readers,

Good news is not particularly common at the moment. Whether it's worrying political developments or the noticeably stagnating economy – there have certainly been easier times. With the DFL Economic Report 23-24 however, German professional football is sending out positive signals against the trend. First of all, economically.

Never before have the 36 clubs reported such a high cumulative turnover: €5.87 billion. Never before have so many people been employed by the clubs of the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 and their subsidiaries: almost 62,000. Never before has professional football paid so many taxes and duties: around €1.66 billion.



Hans-Joachim Watzke

Speaker of the DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga e.V. Executive Committee and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the DFL GmbH

Beyond the economic dimension, football has a positive impact. Our stadiums are places where everyday life takes a break for 90 minutes. Places where people from all walks of life can come together and share emotions and unforgettable moments. There is a great need for this. Over the course of the 2023-24 season, German professional football once again sold a record number of tickets: more than 20.7 million. TV ratings are also at a record level.

But the importance of football is not limited to providing a distraction. The Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 have an impact on our society that goes far beyond the matches. Our clubs are committed to a number of social causes, make invaluable contributions to integration and inclusion, and actively and consistently promote cohesion and democracy. We form a positive community of values centred on tolerant coexistence, with a clear stance against racism and anti-Semitism. In times when the much-cited social glue is becoming weaker and weaker, and people are being driven away from each other in echo chambers created, football creates a sense of community. Across almost all borders.



The Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 have an impact on our society that goes far beyond the matches.



In addition to its sporting significance, this was also the outstanding message of UEFA EURO 2024 in Germany. Declaring football to be a security problem and counting police deployment hours therefore does not do justice to the importance of both our sport and the commitment of the clubs and the league – regardless of the enormous monetary contribution of professional football to public budgets.

In order to do justice to the importance described above in every respect, professional football needs a sustainable basis: attractive leagues with economically stable clubs that are competitive in terms of sport and deeply rooted in society. We have this basis, as the figures and examples for the 2023-24 season show. But it is not a sure-fire success. As a league association, the DFL must and will continue to work to ensure that German professional football can continue to provide positive news in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Hans-Joachim Watzke
Speaker of the DFL Executive Committee

Forewords from the DFL CEOs

Dear readers,

Welcome to the digital version of our DFL business report. After more than 20 years, this is the first time that we have prepared the balance sheets of German professional football comprehensively and exclusively online. On this platform, you will be guided through all the relevant key figures, but you can also browse the site yourself, discover new things or search specifically for what interests you.

With the Economic Report, the DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga, the umbrella organisation of the 36 Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 clubs, takes stock of each season. The 2023-24 season has now been in the books for several months and the new season is in full swing. However, due to the different financial year cycles – many clubs report from July 1 to June 30 of the following year (i.e. by season), while others report by calendar year – the DFL Economic Report is traditionally published with a certain delay. These figures therefore relate back to the 2023-24 season.



It is important for us to note that the facts and figures do not primarily highlight the DFL's track record. These are the cumulative figures of the 36 clubs – from the clubs promoted to the second division all the way up to the record champions. The balance sheets are correspondingly diverse when you look at the details.

Nevertheless, the overall picture of German professional football is one that was also characterised by positive trends over the past season. For the first time since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, all 18 Bundesliga clubs reported positive equity again. The same applies to 14 of the 18 second division clubs. The clubs are generating transfer surpluses and financing themselves from a balanced mix of income. In terms of expenditure, a further reduction in the proportion of squad costs is remarkable, especially in an international comparison. If the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 are considered together, this proportion is 34 per cent, which is lower than ever before. In the other four top European leagues (England, Spain, Italy, France), club squad costs account for between 50 per cent and 70 per cent of total expenditure.

With renewed sales growth and a rational use of funds, the clubs have consolidated and strengthened their position at all key levels

- As companies with a total turnover of €5.87 billion
- As an employer that employs almost 62,000 people
- As taxpayers who pay €1.66 billion into the public purse
- As social institutions that take responsibility in their region and give something back from the trust, support and loyalty of their fans
- And last but not least, as the creator of great emotions and unforgettable moments that gather more people than ever before in the stadiums and in front of the television.

These dimensions of professional football do not contradict each other, but belong together – indeed, they are mutually dependent. Only economically stable clubs create a lasting presence and long-term sporting success. Only socially anchored clubs reach millions of fans. Only clubs that inspire and move can fulfil their role as an emotional home and community of values. And only clubs that combine all of this are on a sound economic footing.



The overall picture of German professional football is one that was also characterised by positive trends over the past season.



Central marketing is an important basis for economic stability. On average, almost every third euro generated by the clubs comes from this. At this point, the available figures are also figures from the DFL – which is responsible for the central marketing of the 36 clubs. Above all, however, we see it as our task to help shape the positive and future-proof framework in which our clubs operate both in sporting and economic terms.

In view of the international competitive situation, there are numerous challenges here. The fact that German clubs operate rationally and deliberately limit the potential influence of external investors with the 50+1 rule and corresponding club structures should not be a competitive disadvantage. We are therefore called upon to find our own creative ways to achieve sustainable growth – and at the same time to ensure fair and transparent competitive conditions with our partners in European football. These are also dimensions that do not contradict each other, but belong together.

Over the course of the 2023-24 season, the clubs achieved a lot in a challenging environment, as the DFL Economic Report shows. And we are confident that this will remain the case in the coming years.

Yours sincerely,



Marc Lenz
DFL CEO



Steffen Merkel
DFL CEO

Football as it's meant to be: The 2023-24 season at a glance

For eleven years, FC Bayern München have made their rivals despair, and the question was repeatedly asked: could these Bavarians even be beaten? The 2023-24 season provided the answer: yes, it is possible. Bayer 04 Leverkusen not only snatched the title from Bayern's grasp, but also secured the first championship in the club's history in impressive fashion. Even in their strongest seasons, FC Bayern have never remained unbeaten, whereas Die Werkself did. 34 match days without a single defeat was a first in league history.

Leverkusen's fabulous season also became a special story thanks to coach Xabi Alonso. The Spaniard moulded Die Werkself into a strong team with an entertaining style of play that also impressed defensively – only 24 goals conceded was the best figure in the league. Even in games where things got tight, it was late goals time and time again that led to a win or at least a draw. Die Werkself scored eight times in stoppage time.

Leverkusen's 90 points at the end of the season belies the fact that FC Bayern were also very strong with 72 points. Even the outstanding 36 goals that made star striker Harry Kane the Bundesliga's top scorer in his first season with Bayern, by far the most of any player in Europe's top leagues, only helped his team to third place.

Why only third place? There was also VfB Stuttgart, who had only managed to avoid relegation in the relegation play-off of previous season but took off in 2023-24 under coach Sebastian Hoeneß. 73 points secured the runners-up spot for the Swabians, with attacker Serhou Guirassy contributing 28 goals and keeping Harry Kane on his heels for a long time. In total, the Bundesliga clubs scored 985 goals (3.2 on average per game) – a record in this millennium.

As if that weren't enough extraordinary achievements for one season, 1. FC Heidenheim also achieved something incredible: the promoted team, which started as one of the teams most likely for relegation, finished eighth in their first ever Bundesliga season and thus qualified for the UEFA Conference League. European football at the little river Brenz – a huge success for Frank Schmidt's team. He has been coaching at Heidenheim since 2007, leading the club from the fifth tier of German football to a European competition.

The mood was less euphoric for large parts of the season for 1. FC Union Berlin, who found themselves in a relegation battle after qualifying for the UEFA Champions League in the previous season. They managed to avoid relegation in dramatic manner as Janik Haberer scored a penalty in extra time on matchday 34 to secure a 2-1 win against Freiburg and secured 15th place.

Instead VfL Bochum 1848 had to go into the relegation play-offs, with the club from the Ruhr area looking even more hopeless than the Berliners. Bochum lost the home match at Castroper Straße 0-3 against Bundesliga 2 third-placed Fortuna Düsseldorf. But anyone who thought that would seal their relegation was mistaken. In the return match in the North Rhine-Westphalian capital, Bochum levelled the scores with a 3-0 away win and then won 6-5 on penalties.

1. FC Köln and SV Darmstadt 98 could not be saved from relegation in 2023-24, with both the Billy Goats and the Lilies going down to Bundesliga 2 – and it was an exciting season there too.

Bundesliga Final standings 2023-24

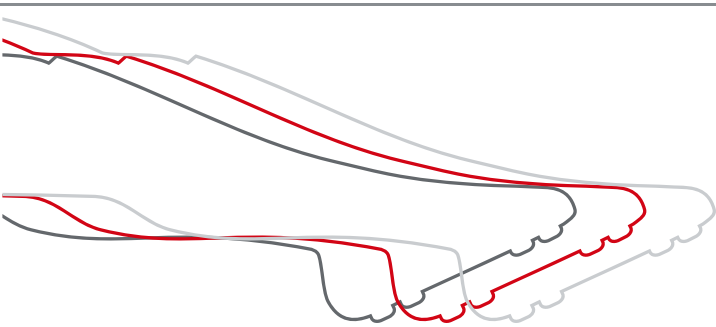
		Matches	W	D	L	Goals	+/-	Points
	1. Bayer 04 Leverkusen	34	28	6	0	89:24	+65	90
	2. VfB Stuttgart	34	23	4	7	78:39	+39	73
	3. FC Bayern München	34	23	3	8	94:45	+49	72
	4. RB Leipzig	34	19	8	7	77:39	+38	65
	5. Borussia Dortmund	34	18	9	7	68:43	+25	63
	6. Eintracht Frankfurt	34	11	14	9	51:50	+1	47
	7. TSG Hoffenheim	34	13	7	14	66:66	0	46
	8. 1. FC Heidenheim 1846	34	10	12	12	50:55	-5	42
	9. SV Werder Bremen	34	11	9	14	48:54	-6	42
	10. Sport-Club Freiburg	34	11	9	14	45:58	-13	42
	11. FC Augsburg	34	10	9	15	50:60	-10	39
	12. VfL Wolfsburg	34	10	7	17	41:56	-15	37
	13. 1. FSV Mainz 05	34	7	14	13	39:51	-12	35
	14. Borussia Mönchengladbach	34	7	13	14	56:67	-11	34
	15. 1. FC Union Berlin	34	9	6	19	33:58	-25	33
	16. VfL Bochum 1848	34	7	12	15	42:74	-32	33
	17. 1. FC Köln	34	5	12	17	28:60	-32	27
	18. SV Darmstadt 98	34	3	8	23	30:86	-56	17

The performance level in the Bundesliga 2 is traditionally high, with many clubs hoping for one of the coveted promotion spots every season. Holstein Kiel came out on top for the first time ever. Die Störche qualified for the Bundesliga thanks to 68 points and became the first team from Schleswig-Holstein in the first division.

FC St. Pauli gained one more point than Kiel. It was the sixth Bundesliga promotion for the club from Hamburg, but the first as champions of the single-tier Bundesliga 2. Die Kiezkicker were well deserving of their championship celebrations. With 20 wins in 34 games, St. Pauli set a new club record in the Bundesliga 2, and the total of 69 points was the best haul in the club's history.

One's joy was another's sorrow in Hamburg. Because the city rivals were narrowly beaten in fourth place in the table. The promotions of Kiel and St. Pauli made Hamburger SV the team that has currently played in the Bundesliga 2 for the longest time without an interruption.

A total of 947 goals were scored in the Bundesliga 2 in the 2023-24 season. It was the highest-scoring season in 22 years. The most spectacular match in terms of goals scored was between 1. FC Magdeburg and Hertha BSC. 6-4 was the final score from Magdeburg's perspective. It was not only the highest-scoring game of the season, but also a historic one, as FCM became the first team in Bundesliga 2 history to win despite conceding four times.





















With **947** goals
the 2023-24 Bundesliga 2 season
was the highest-scoring in
22 years

The three top scorers played a large part in the fact that there were so many cheers: Robert Glatzel from HSV, Haris Tabaković from Hertha BSC and Christos Tzolis from Fortuna Düsseldorf each scored 22 goals and thus shared the title of top scorer.

It was the farewell season for another great goal scorer. Simon Terodde decided to hang up his football boots at the age of 36. He missed out on his goal to celebrate another promotion of FC Schalke 04 in his final season, but he will go down in history as the top scorer in 2. Bundesliga having netted 177 goals in total.

Last but not least, Schalke's fans earned a special place in the history books. On average, 61,000 of them came to the home games, meaning that the Royal Blues beat HSV's Bundesliga 2 record by more than 8,000 spectators on average per game. No wonder that Bundesliga 2 set a new attendance record with a total of almost nine million stadium spectators and was even better attended on average (28,796) than the French Ligue 1. The Bundesliga once again recorded the most spectators of all European top flights averaging 38,973 spectators per game.

Bundesliga 2 Final standings 2023-24

		Matches	W	D	L	Goals	+/-	Points
	1. FC St. Pauli	34	20	9	5	62:36	+26	69
	2. Holstein Kiel	34	21	5	8	65:39	+26	68
	3. Fortuna Düsseldorf	34	18	9	7	72:40	+32	63
	4. Hamburger SV	34	17	7	10	64:44	+20	58
	5. Karlsruher SC	34	15	10	9	68:48	+20	55
	6. Hannover 96	34	13	13	8	59:44	+15	52
	7. SC Paderborn 07	34	15	7	12	54:54	±0	52
	8. SpVgg Greuther Fürth	34	14	8	12	50:49	+1	50
	9. Hertha BSC	34	13	9	12	69:59	+10	48
	10. FC Schalke 04	34	12	7	15	53:60	-7	43
	11. SV Elversberg	34	12	7	15	49:63	-14	43
	12. 1. FC Nürnberg	34	11	7	16	43:64	-21	40
	13. 1. FC Kaiserslautern	34	11	6	17	59:64	-5	39
	14. 1. FC Magdeburg	34	9	11	14	46:54	-8	38
	15. Eintracht Braunschweig	34	11	5	18	37:53	-16	38
	16. SV Wehen Wiesbaden	34	8	8	18	36:50	-14	32
	17. Hansa Rostock	34	9	4	21	30:57	-27	31
	18. VfL Osnabrück	34	6	10	18	31:69	-38	28

Records and trends

The key financial indicators from the 2023-24 season show German professional football to be in an extremely healthy position. Never before have total revenues, spectator numbers, employment rates, and taxes and duties paid been as high as in the past season. Nevertheless, challenges remain to ensure the long-term profitability of clubs.

German professional football remains a magnet for fans and spectators, with clubs and limited companies that operate efficiently remaining an area of great economic and social importance. This is underlined by the figures in the DFL Economic Report 2025, which is based on the financial statements of the 36 Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 clubs and limited companies from the 2023-24 season.

The most important trends in detail:

Professional football is growing

With €5.87 billion, the 36 clubs achieved the highest collective revenue in their history. This was 12 per cent higher than the previous season's record of around €5.24 billion, which broke the €5 billion barrier for the first time.

Bundesliga 2 reaches record levels

For the first time, Bundesliga 2 contributed more than €1 billion to the total revenue of German licensed football. The noticeable growth of Bundesliga 2 can be seen in numerous other economic figures. This effect is primarily due to the changed composition of the league – specifically the relegation of economically significant clubs such as FC Schalke 04 and Hertha Berlin from the Bundesliga.

Professional football creates growth and jobs

Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 create jobs and, fortunately, the number of people in paid employment directly and indirectly related to the game has risen again. At just under 62,000 people, there are more people working in German professional football than ever before. The previous high of 56,000 from the "pre-coronavirus season" 2018-19 was exceeded by more than 10 per cent. The total amount of taxes and duties also rose again, to a record figure of €1.66 billion. Combined with the total added value of €14.2 billion ([McKinsey study on the economic and socio-political relevance of the Bundesliga](#)), the bottom line is that German licensed football has a clearly positive effect on the public purse at federal, state and local authority level.



BUNDESLIGA

Revenue mix

(€ million)

Match revenue

523.7

Contribution to total revenue
10.91%

Advertising

1,018.0

Contribution to total revenue
21.20%

Media revenue
(all competitions)

1,534.1

Contribution to total revenue
31.95%

Transfers

1,004.8

Contribution to total revenue
20.93%

Merchandising

271.2

Contribution to total revenue
5.65%

Other

450.0

Contribution to total revenue
9.37%

Total

4,801.9

MATCH REVENUE Primarily income from ticket sales for matches in national and international competitions

ADVERTISING Primarily income from contracts with main sponsors and shirt sponsors as well as stadium and club rights

MEDIA REVENUE Primarily revenue from the marketing of media rights to matches in national (including the DFB Cup) and international competitions, as well as revenue from other joint marketing such as commercial partnerships

TRANSFERS Revenue from all transfer and training compensation fees

MERCHANDISING Income from merchandising

OTHER TAKINGS Revenue from the transfer of utilisation rights, public catering, letting and leasing, membership fees and other items

The clubs have largely overcome the impact of coronavirus

For the first time since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting government restrictions on stadium utilisation, all 18 Bundesliga clubs have positive equity again. Fourteen of the 18 Bundesliga 2 clubs also posted positive after-tax results. In addition, the share of media revenues, i.e. the income from media rights generated and distributed by the DFL's central marketing, has returned to a healthy level of around 31 per cent. This means that media revenue is still the most important source of income for the 36 clubs, but it is being supplemented by other income to a greater extent than was the case in times of empty stadiums.

German professional football operates responsibly

The proportion of the clubs' total expenditure accounted for payroll costs for match operations, i.e. ultimately the payroll costs for players and coaches, fell once again. Looking at the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 together, this figure is 34 per cent, the lowest it has ever been. This is particularly remarkable by international standards. In the other four top European leagues (England, Spain, Italy, France), club payroll costs for players and coaches account for 50 to 70 per cent of total expenditure.

Overall, the Bundesliga made the highest profit in its history: around €115 million. This was helped by a significant increase in transfer revenue from Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 clubs to more than 18 per cent of total revenue. This proves that the clubs are successful in generating income as a result of transfers at a high level. At the same time, however, it also shows that many clubs are dependent on such income and therefore on good team and transfer management. In other top European leagues, operating losses can be offset by other means, such as through external capital injections from owners. With the 50+1 rule, German professional football is deliberately taking a different approach here, which requires even more rational management.





BUNDESLIGA

Revenue mix

(€ million)

Match revenue

261.2

Contribution to total revenue
24.45%

Advertising

166.5

Contribution to total revenue
15.59%

Media revenue

(all competitions)

280.4

Contribution to total revenue
26.25%

Transfers

98.5

Contribution to total revenue
9.22%

Merchandising

88.1

Contribution to total revenue
8.24%

Other

173.5

Contribution to total revenue
16.24%

Total

1,068.1

MATCH REVENUE Primarily income from ticket sales for matches in national and international competitions

ADVERTISING Primarily income from contracts with main sponsors and shirt sponsors as well as stadium and club rights

MEDIA REVENUE Primarily revenue from the marketing of media rights to matches in national (including the DFB Cup) and international competitions, as well as revenue from other joint marketing such as commercial partnerships

TRANSFERS Revenue from all transfer and training compensation fees

MERCHANDISING Income from merchandising

OTHER TAKINGS Revenue from the transfer of utilisation rights, public catering, letting and leasing, membership fees and other items

Profitable professional football is a constant challenge

It is also true that making a profit remains a challenge for most clubs and limited companies – even though, for example, the increase in expenditure in the Bundesliga of six per cent compared to the previous year is significantly lower than the increase in revenue. 17 of the 36 clubs were in the black (nine in the Bundesliga, eight in Bundesliga 2). The liabilities of the 36 clubs increased from €2.20 billion to €2.66 billion.

The Bundesliga 2 recorded a net loss of €33.1 million, in contrast to an almost even balance sheet in the previous season (-€2 million). Such shifts also depend on the composition of the league and are disproportionately influenced by the development of a few clubs. However, in the context of the debate on policing costs, for example, it is important to note that most clubs cannot easily absorb additional costs, but are operating within tight financial constraints. This is also due to the fact that, in contrast to developments in other countries, clubs continue to charge comparatively moderate ticket prices.

Full stadiums remain a special feature of German football

The 36 professional clubs sold a total of 20,737,276 tickets in the 2023-24 season, the highest number ever. This beat the previous season's record (19,755,465) by almost five per cent. With an average of 33,885 tickets sold per match, German licensed football also set a new record for average attendance. In Bundesliga 2 in particular, this popularity is also an enormous economic factor, with match revenues accounting for almost 25 per cent of its total revenue.

To summarise, the balance sheet is strong after the 2023-24 season. German professional football remains on a stable growth path and is making a significant positive contribution to life in Germany, not only emotionally but also economically.



Our organisation

German licensed football consists of the 36 professional clubs, DFL e.V. and DFL GmbH. But what form does the organisational and financial framework take?

The 36 clubs and limited companies of the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 established the “Ligaverband” on 18 December 2000 with the aim of establishing the independence of German licensed football. In a context of increasing economic strength, constantly evolving requirements and growing interest from the public, there was a realisation that the professional clubs needed their own organisation, which was then created under the name “Die Liga – Fußballverband e.V.”. At the 2016 General Assembly, the clubs voted to change the name to DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga e.V. (or DFL e.V. for short). This brought the name in line with the Frankfurt-based DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga GmbH (or DFL GmbH for short), which has been managing the business operations of DFL e.V. as a wholly owned subsidiary since its foundation.

The members of DFL e.V. are the clubs that receive the appropriate licence for the respective season and thus play in the Bundesliga or Bundesliga 2. This DFL Economic Report 23-24 provides a cumulative presentation of the key economic performance indicators of the clubs that played in the Bundesliga or Bundesliga 2 during the 2023-24 season.

DFL GmbH is responsible for the organisation and marketing of German professional football in order to create the optimum conditions in the interest of the professional clubs. One of DFL GmbH’s tasks is to market the media rights to matches in the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2, as well as the Supercup and the relegation play-offs, nationally and worldwide on the best possible terms. As a contracting partner of the rights holders, DFL e.V. ultimately returns the income generated from marketing to the clubs of the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2. This is a major economic factor that needs to be taken into consideration. In the 2023-24 season, revenues from the marketing of media rights to matches in national and international competitions alone accounted for around 31 per cent of the total revenue of the 36 professional clubs. The majority is attributable to revenues from the central marketing of the rights to the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 matches by the DFL.

As an organisation fee, DFL e.V. itself receives a percentage of the national and international broadcast revenue and of the revenue from sponsorship and group marketing – i.e. of the income generated centrally. DFL e.V. largely finances its own budget, including the services provided for it by DFL GmbH.

The structure and financial organisation of German licensed football



21st Remembrance Day in German football

80 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, the DFL and professional clubs are focussing on the voices of Holocaust survivors.

“...that Auschwitz will never happen again!”

80 years ago, on 27 January 1945, the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp was liberated. German football has been marking this event for more than 20 years and most recently commemorated the people persecuted, deported and murdered by the National Socialists on matchdays around 27 January 2025.

Over one million people were murdered in Auschwitz. The site therefore symbolises the Holocaust, the genocide of European Jews by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. The date of the liberation is also the symbolic beginning of the end of the Holocaust. It enabled the persecuted people to survive – not symbolically, but in reality.

Only a few contemporary witnesses are still able to talk about their experiences. On the 80th anniversary, it was therefore particularly important to us to listen to the survivors' accounts and pass them on.



Surviving after Auschwitz meant much more than simply emerging with your life. It meant the loss of one's home, the difficult search for relatives and friends and mourning for all those lost. All too often, it meant a decades-long undignified struggle for recognition and financial compensation. It meant overcoming trauma and creating a new life for yourself after your old one was destroyed beyond repair, finding a new home, starting over for yourself and the next generations.

Appreciation for life after

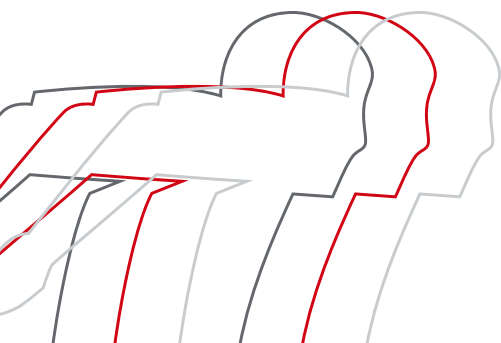
Now, 80 years on, we would like to remember and honour all the new things that the survivors have made possible and created at the same time as remembering. Families were founded, communities were rebuilt – and finally, the state of Israel was created as a democratic homeland for the Jewish people. Today, only around 200,000 of those who survived the Holocaust are still alive worldwide, half of them in Israel. They not only leave behind their memories, but they have also helped to shape our present and our future.

This includes keeping the memory alive. The survivors campaigned for a memorial to be built on the site at Auschwitz. Current memorials around the world are largely thanks to the many years of work by survivors and their relatives, even in the face of resistance.

An active culture of remembrance began in German football at the turn of the millennium. Today, remembrance work is carried out in a variety of ways by clubs and associations, by fans and fan projects, also with the support of the !Nie Wieder initiative.

BUNDESLIGA The DFL magazine

What does remembrance work have to do with football, 80 years after the liberation of Auschwitz? The focus topic in issue 1|25 of BUNDESLIGA deals with this and other questions in detail. [Click here for the e-paper.](#) (available in German)



Never again means forever

It is clear to us that active remembrance does not only mean remembering the victims, looking back and reflecting. It also requires a constant confrontation with current anti-Semitism and racism today. It requires daily commitment to our democracy and to a society free from hate speech and oppression. And it means showing solidarity with Jews, even and especially when this requires courage and taking a stand. This is even more urgent in view of the increasing antisemitic incidents around the world since the terrorist attack by Hamas on 7 October 2023.

German football is aware of its resonance and the associated responsibility and, after 80 years, is more determined than ever to pass on the message of the survivors of the Auschwitz concentration camp of 'Never again!'

Never again means now and forever.



Matchday 19: RB Leipzig - Bayer 04 Leverkusen

TOGETHER!

Strong sign against discrimination

TOGETHER! STOP HATE. BE A TEAM. The message took centre stage during the 2024 International Weeks against Racism..

Around the 26th matchday of the 2023-24 season, German professional football sent out a clear statement in favour of diversity, respect and social cohesion. The joint message from the professional clubs, DFL and DFL Foundation was: TOGETHER! STOP HATE. BE A TEAM. The campaign period ran parallel to the International Weeks against Racism from 11 to 24 March.

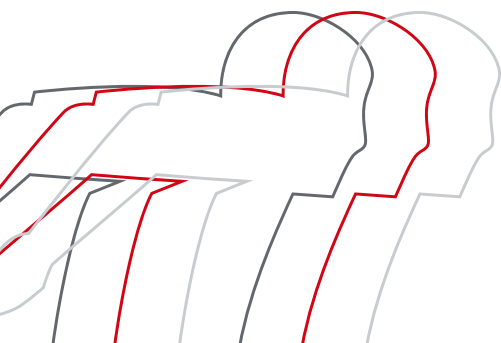


In the stadiums, the clearly visible logo of the campaign was placed on ball steles, match balls and substitution boards. In this way, the TOGETHER! message also spread through the broadcasts of the national and international DFL media partners. Digital activations primarily raised awareness of prejudice and discrimination in everyday life. A particular focus was placed on discrimination across all dimensions of diversity – including age, ethnic origin and nationality, gender and gender identity, physical and mental abilities, religion and ideology, sexual orientation and social background.

An overview of the initiatives and sponsored projects of the 36 professional clubs, the DFL and the DFL Foundation is available in the form of a [landing page](#) on the #BundesligaWIRKT platform.

International Weeks against Racism

The International Weeks against Racism are an initiative of the United Nations. Each year, two weeks around the International Day against Racism on 21 March are selected as the campaign period, during which the Foundation against Racism calls on people to take a stand against racism and discrimination. The DFL and DFL Foundation supported the initiative together with the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 clubs back in 2023.



#BundesligaWIRKT

The 36 clubs of the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2, which merged in 2000 to form the DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga e.V., are socially committed in a variety of ways. However, there is no simple or short answer to the question of what professional football does for society.

The 36 clubs are so different in their structures and traditions, and the ways and means of becoming socially active are just as diverse. Most clubs are primarily involved in their home region. In many cases, they work together with local partners, projects or institutions. Overall, more than a million people benefit directly from the clubs' involvement every year.



[#BundesligaWIRKT offers an overview of the social commitment of German professional football. Click here to go directly to the platform.](#)



Sustainability

Sustainability in and through German professional football

Since the 2023-24 season, to which the current Economic Report refers, sustainability guidelines have been an integral part of the licensing process in German professional football. At the DFL General Assembly in December 2023, the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 clubs decided to adjust this guideline in order to incorporate the initial learnings and to strengthen key areas in which action can be taken. The proposal for amendments to the licensing for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 seasons were drawn up together with the Sustainability Commission, which comprises representatives from ten clubs who discuss sustainability issues in depth and advise the DFL Executive Committee on this topic.

As a first step, the sustainability criteria for licensing for the 2024-25 season were further strengthened and defined in more detail. In the interests of consistency, overlaps with regulations of other licensing criteria have been harmonised and adapted to other aspects of the DFL licensing process. In addition, thematically related criteria will be bundled together within the sustainability guidelines so that unnecessary duplication can be avoided, and the number of criteria can be reduced without compromising on the content of the requirements. Certain criteria are listed as B criteria as defined by the licensing regulations; failure to meet these criteria will result in sanctions. The number of such criteria will be gradually increased to ensure that the clubs are committed to consistently raising their level of ambition. This also gives all clubs the opportunity and obligation to continuously develop and expand their structures with a focus on the future.



Pioneer

The Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 became the first major professional football leagues to anchor mandatory sustainability guidelines in their licensing regulations.

Commitment to sustainability in the DFL statutes as early as 2021

At the DFL General Assembly in December 2021, German professional football had already incorporated a clear commitment to sustainability in all its various aspects – ecological, economic and social – and included this in the preamble to DFL e.V. statutes. On this basis, in May 2022, the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 became the first major professional football leagues to anchor mandatory sustainability guidelines in their licensing regulations. However, the work for greater sustainability goes beyond checking and granting eligibility to participate in the top German leagues.



Exchange, networking and further training

In order to further develop the commitment and continuously increase its impact, those responsible for German professional football are networking with each other and beyond. In November 2024, around 160 participants met at the DFB Campus in Frankfurt for the first Sustainability Day organised jointly by the DFL and DFB. The day, which was attended by representatives from professional and amateur clubs, was all about learning from each other. Key sustainability topics were covered in workshops, such as sustainability management, energy and resource management, child and youth protection, prevention and health as well as anti-discrimination and diversity.

Another important event is the DFL Sustainability Forum. Here, stakeholders from politics, business, science, society and sport as well as club representatives from Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 exchange views on the topic of sustainability in and through football. The last event in September 2023 was held under the motto; “Shaping the future”; and provided impetus for German football’s approach to topics such as mobility, the circular economy, economic performance and diversity.

DFL supports Leuphana University and UN initiative “Football for the Goals”;

The DFL supports future sustainability experts through its cooperation with the online class “Sustainability Management in Sport and Sports Organisations” at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg. As co-organiser of a further education programme on the development of diversity and inclusion in football, the DFL enables people working in associations and clubs to expand their expertise in the area of sustainability.

As a member of the United Nations’ “Football for the Goals” initiative, the DFL is committed to actively working towards achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 SDGs are global goals for sustainable development that have already been taken into account in the DFL’s sustainability guidelines.

The DFL intends to further expand all these networks and partnerships to facilitate even more sustainable development. In the spirit of continuous further development and to enable the clubs to make the necessary preparations, the sustainability guidelines for the 2025-26 season have already been adopted. For the first time, all clubs will then have to provide independent proof that they comprehensively fulfil the sustainability criteria within the scope of the licensing process. This replaces the self-disclosure that was previously sufficient for some criteria. Consistent proof that all criteria have been met must be provided by 15 March, or by 1 March for candidates from the 3. Liga.