



Bayern boss fires back at Lewandowski

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NIGERIA: -

Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has fired back at Robert Lewandowski after the Poland hot-shot criticised the Bavarian giants' spending policy.

Bayern crashed to a shock 2-0 defeat at Hoffenheim on Saturday which left them sixth in the German league table — their worst position after the first three games since 2010/11.

The mood ahead of Tuesday's first Champions League match at home to Anderlecht was not helped by Lewandowski telling magazine Der Spiegel that Bayern should spend big to attract more world-class players.

They set a new Bundesliga record in June by signing France midfielder Corentin Tolisso from Lyon for 41.5 million euros (\$49.9m), but Lewandowski feels Bayern risk being left behind by Europe's top clubs.

Bayern's president Uli Hoeness had already described the 222 million euros Paris Saint-Germain paid for Neymar, and the signing of Kylian Mbappe in a deal which could reach 180m euros, as "madness".

So Rummenigge has taken Lewandowski's words as a thinly-veiled attack on the club.

"Apparently, Robert was irritated by the Paris transfers," Rummenigge told German daily Bild.

"He is employed by us as a footballer, he earns a lot of money, and I regret his statements."

Lewandowski is under contract until 2021 and Rummenigge has accused his agent Maik Barthel of meddling in Bayern's business.

When Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang eclipsed Lewandowski to become the Bundesliga's top-scorer on the final day of last season, Barthel accused Bayern's coach Carlo Ancelotti and players of not doing enough to help him score.

"Unfortunately his adviser, Mr Barthel, is often the 'Spiritus Rector' (guiding spirit) and this was again the case," said Rummenigge.

"The interview was deliberately organized by FC Bayern and his own comments harm Robert."

Lewandowski said Bayern must spend big if they are realistic about winning the Champions League for the first time since 2013, but Rummenigge sees nothing wrong with their spending policy.

"Robert does not need to worry, we have a very good squad again this season," said Rummenigge.

"We have a long-standing, serious and successful philosophy and have achieved great success.

"We have won all national and international titles possible over the past five years.

"Let's see if Paris now wins the Champions League.

"They must at least now. Other people have tried in vain to buy titles."

Rummenigge says Bayern's director of sport Hasan Salihamidzic has talked to Lewandowski about the interview, but drew the line when asked if the striker will be dropped for his comments.

"The coach must decide that, but I know how to get players to see reason," replied Rummenigge.

"If you publicly criticize the coach, the club or the other players, you will get stress with me personally.

"I am a fan of democracy and freedom of opinion, but we are currently too smart to yap on instead of focusing on football.

"It must not be harmful to the club. We need to be more efficient and serious again."

"It's September, and I do not want to hear anything from big games in April."

"Arrogance is not appropriate; the league title is not in our lap."

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