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2022-23

## **Kolo Muani, Eintracht Frankfurt**

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**You have quickly become one of the stars of the Bundesliga and are mentioned in the same sentences as Bayern and Dortmund's big players. How have you managed this in such a short space of time?**

“Quite simply, I have played my game. And the team has helped too. I help my teammates to express themselves out on the pitch and they help me hugely to do the same. Without them, I would not have been able to achieve what I have this season. It's a team effort. And I have done my part too. It's an atmosphere that we have created together, and it benefits all of us.”

**You made an immediate impression on the fans in your first Bundesliga game against Bayern. Were you surprised at all?**

“Yes, I enjoyed it very much. It was my first game at home. Unfortunately, we started with a defeat. But I think even in the pre-season matches, fans could see that I bring something different to the team. That is my game, that is how I play football, that's what I do. I am very proud to have been accepted into this club and into the family.”

**You scored on your Bundesliga debut against Bayern. Was that a source of pride for you despite the heavy defeat?**

“Yes, that defeat was painful. I wouldn't say that I was instrumental. But I did score my goal, yes. To be honest, I wasn't very satisfied. But a goal is a goal. But I wasn't happy with the defeat.”

**You and Lindström are the fastest players at Eintracht Frankfurt. Do you enjoy playing together?**

“I know his qualities very well and I know his movements on the pitch. It's a pleasure playing with him, as I often say. We have similar qualities – he is fast, he likes to dribble, he is direct. We get on very well off the pitch and that makes it even easier to link up on the pitch.”

**Does it make you happy to hear thousands of Eintracht fans singing the Kolo chant?**

“Yes, it makes me smile to hear it. It is very touching and warms my heart. And it makes me want to score a goal every single game. And to make an impression so that they sing the song every day.”

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**Do you like the Kolo chant? Can you sing it?**

“I love hearing it. It is great that they managed to come up with a creative chant in such a short period of time. I don’t know it off by heart, but it goes something like: ‘Kolo, Kolo, Kolo, Kolo, Kolo, Kolo, Kolo, Muani! And then repeat.”

**What can Eintracht Frankfurt achieve in the Bundesliga this season?**

“We are capable of lots of things. We can come back from any scoreline in a match. And I think we can catch those teams that are above us in the table. There are lots of points still up for grabs and there’s a place in the Champions League to fight for. There are a lot of games left this season. We can be successful.”

**Are you happy to hear that lots of big clubs around Europe are following your progress?**

“It is nice to hear but I do not concern myself with any of that. My work is here at Frankfurt, I have signed a five-year contract with the club. And I have a huge amount of ambition with Eintracht Frankfurt. I want to go far with this club and help my teammates as much as I can. So, I am not listening to any of that at this moment – it is not my concern right now.”

**What would you have done if football had not worked out?**

“I would have doubled down and kept grinding in order to become a professional footballer. Football only.”

**What has been your best Bundesliga moment so far?**

“My best moment in the Bundesliga? I would say my match against Hoffenheim. I scored once and got two assists. It was a great game.”

**What has been your worst Bundesliga moment so far?**

“I have had quite a few. I would say the defeats we have suffered and my red card against Union Berlin.”

**What has been the best moment in your life so far?**

“Our qualification for the Champions League and my goal against Sporting Lisbon.”

**What has been the worst moment in your life so far?**

“Outside of football? I don’t have any. Football is my life. I haven’t had any bad moments.”

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**What makes Eintracht so special as a club?**

“It’s a club that really feels like a family. I feel very much at home here. They opened their doors to me, and I feel very good here. It’s a real community and everyone you meet here is very friendly. That is what makes this club special.”

**What is your opinion regarding Frankfurt as a city?**

“It’s a beautiful city. It really is. I enjoy walking through it and it’s always very busy. There’s lots of shops. I like it a lot, it’s nice.”

**What are your hobbies?**

“I sleep a lot. And I enjoy watching TV and series. I listen to music, and I read too sometimes.”

**What music do you like to listen to?**

“French music and a bit of American music too. A bit of everything.”

**Who are your favorite artists?**

“In France, I am listening to Ninho a lot at the moment. In America, Quavo. And a few others.”

**Who are the most important people in your life?**

“The people close to me: My parents, my brother and my sister. Those are the most important people for me.”

**Have you ever considered representing Congo, the country your parents are from?**

“That was in my mind at one point, yes. But my dad told me to wait to see whether the French national team were interested in me. And this year the French national team came calling. And I haven’t looked back or spent too much time reflecting. I chose France straight away.”

**How often have you been to Congo?**

“I went very often when I was younger. Four or five times probably.”

**Does your missed goal in the World Cup final keep you up at night?**

“There was a lot of sadness. But in the moment, I sensed a goal was coming. I tried to put it in at the near post, but Martinez blocked it well with his leg. There was also an opportunity to maybe pass to Kylian. There were lots of options – as you can see if you watch it back. But it’s too late now. Of course, it stays with you, and it was tough for me. A whole nation was relying on us. So, to miss that chance in the last minute with a whole

nation behind you, it made me very sad. I was the most disappointed of anyone. But I picked myself up. And that will give me strength going forward and the motivation to work harder. And I hope to make my country happy in the future.”

**Tell us about the early stage of your career?**

“I started in Villepinte, the region of Paris that I grew up in.”

**How old were you when you first started playing football and who supported you at that age?**

“I started playing at FC Villepinte. But I was only six years old. And I met my first couple of coaches while I was there who helped me a lot. I am still in contact with them now. They really helped me to fall in love with football. I gave them everything.”

**What coaches helped you during that time?**

“My first coach was Virgil. And my second was Loïc Féry.”

**Are you still in contact with them?**

“Yes, I am still in contact with Loïc Féry. He has known me since I was a young boy. Now I have grown up. It’s nice to have this relationship.”

**What memories do you have of your time at Villepinte?**

“That’s where I learned to play football – I have only positive memories of my time there. It was enjoyable – you are young, you have fun with your friends, you relax. There were no problems, no depression, you’re just having a laugh.”

**Why did you decide to move to Tremblay?**

“Villepinte was not a high level. My dad helped me a lot at that time. So, I moved to Tremblay, which was only 15 minutes away from where we lived. But it was a step up. I always wanted to develop as a player and set my sights on the next level. So that’s why I decided to change clubs.”

**You then moved to Nantes after a stint at Torcy. How important was this move for your development?**

“After Tremblay, I went to Torcy. I spent some good years there. I was always focused on taking the next step which is why I went to Torcy. I had some difficult seasons there. And then I signed for Nantes. At Nantes too, I was only focused on improving as a player.”

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**What role has your family played in your career as a professional footballer?**

“A huge role. Outside of football, they are always there for me. They give me advice – for football and also for life as a whole. They take care of everything for me which allows me to focus on football. They help me a lot.”

**As well as your family, are there any friends who have supported your journey?**

“Yes, I have two very close friends. They are youth coaches at U13 level. They help me a lot and give me advice. They are also good personal trainers. We speak every day and they help me a lot. We have a great friendship. Abdoul and Baba. They are my childhood friends.”

**Have Abdoul and Baba come to watch an Eintracht game?**

“One of them has come yes, but the other hasn’t yet. Maybe he’ll come this weekend.”

**And who could we speak to in order to find out more about your footballing roots?**

“My former coaches, my two friends that I mentioned. And I have other friends from back home who would have some nice things to say about me. But I would say my two friends and then my family, who see my every single day. It is a close circle, Abdoul, Baba and my family.”