Lewandowski completes Bayern switch

AFP, Berlin

Polish striker Robert
Lewandowski will leave
Borussia Dortmund for
German rivals Bayern
Munich in the summer on
a five-year deal, the
European champions confirmed on Saturday.

The 25-year-old has been at Dortmund since the 2010-11 season, but his current contract was due to expire in June, and the Bavarian giants revealed he will join their ranks on July 1.

"We're delighted both parties have today signed a five-year contract until 2019," Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, who was present for the signature along with sporting director Matthias Sammer after Lewandowski underwent a medical.

one of the best strikers in the world," said Rummenigge. "We're very pleased about completing this transfer. He will strengthen the Bayern squad and give us another boost."

"Robert Lewandowski is

Allegri to quit AFP, Milan

AC Milan coach

Massimiliano Allegri has confirmed he will quit the Serie A giants at the end of the season.

For the second successive season Milan struggled to impress in Italy's top flight in the run-up to the festive break and currently sit 13th, 17 points off the first Champions League qualifying spot held by third-placed Napoli.

Speaking a day ahead of Milan's first game of the year, at home to Atalanta, Allegri said he informed club vice-president Adriano Galliani of his irrevocable decision prior to Christmas.

But the 46-year-old, who won the 2011 title with Milan in his first season in charge, has stressed the need for his players' commitment until the end of the season if the club are to avoid a relegation fight.

"I want to finish my

four-year spell with Milan in the best way possible, we'll see what happens but I've made my decision and I won't change my mind," said Allegri.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Portugal and Benfica legend Eusebio in action against AC Milan in the final of the European Cup in 1963 at Wembley, England.

Goodbye Eusebio

AFP, Lisbon

Portuguese football legend Eusebio, who was the top scorer in the 1966 World Cup, died Sunday at the age of 71 years. "Eusebio showed signs of fragility lately, but

I didn't expect this at all," said Joao Malheiro, author of the player's biography "Eusebio - my story", who had spoken to him last week by phone to arrange a lunch.

Among the first reactions to his death came from former Benfica and Portugal team mate Toni.

"I told him when he was alive much of what I felt that it was a privilege to have played with

felt... that it was a privilege to have played with him. We have lost one of the greatest figures of Portuguese sport," the former midfielder said in a statement.

"There were many princes in football but few kings. He is in the gallery of the greats. He was gifted both physically and technically, he was like a Greek statue," he added.

The player's remains will be transferred during the day to the Luz stadium in Lisbon where Benfica fans can pay their final respects to their greatest star, public television station RTP reported.

The Portuguese government also decreed three days of national mourning, with flags in Lisbon to fly at half-mast. The Portuguese Football Federation said there would be a minute's silence ahead of Sunday's Portuguese Cup games, as tributes flowed in for the player.

"Football has lost a legend," FIFA president between 1964 and 1973.

Sepp Blatter wrote on Twitter. "But Eusebio's place among the greats will never be taken away."

"The king! Great loss for all of us! The greatest!" wrote former Portuguese international Luis Figo, who retired in 2009 with a national record of 127 caps, while current Portugal captain Ronaldo wrote: "Always eternal #Eusebio, rest in peace."

The Mozambique-born striker made his name at Benfica, winning 11 league titles and one European Cup during a 15-year spell there. He also won two Golden Boot awards as Europe's leading goalscorer.

Recruited aged 19 by the Lisbon club for his exceptional technical and physical qualities he helped the club win the 1962 European Cup against the Real Madrid of Argentine legend Alfredo Di Stefano

against the Real Madrid of Argentine legend Alfredo Di Stefano.

"He was not only one of the greatest figures of football but also of Portugal. Eusebio is

Portugal," Chelsea's Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho told RTP. "I grew up with Eusebio and Amalia Rodrigues (singer who died in 1999), ... as the

great symbols of Portugal. They are simply immortal," he said.

"There are princes of football but Eusebio

was in the gallery of kings," former Benfica coach Toni told TSF radio.

In addition to his 11 league titles, Eusebio

won five Portuguese cups in his 15 years at Benfica and was Portugal's top league scorer between 1964 and 1973.

He scored 733 times in 745 professional matches.

Despite his scoring record, however, his only appearance at a World Cup finals was in 1966 in England.

"I was the best player in the world, top scorer

in the world and Europe. I did everything, except win a World Cup," Eusebio said in a interview in 2011, recalling his tears after Portugal's loss in the 1966 World Cup semifinal to England.

He helped Portugal however take third place

He helped Portugal however take third place in the tournament, where he was top scorer with nine goals. In total he scored 41 goals in 64 appearances for Portugal.

Former players paid tribute to Eusebio, including Alex Stepney, the former Manchester United goalkeeper, who famously saved a late shot from Eusebio during the 1968 European Cup final at Wembley.

"I made the save and out of the corner of my eye I saw him still standing in front of me. It was only afterwards that I saw what he had done. The fact he was standing there clapping before running away is a mark of the man," Stepney said.

"I was lucky enough to meet him a few times since that 1968 European Cup final and he was the perfect gentleman."

Spanish club Real Madrid said in a statement:
"Real Madrid are sad to learn about Eusebio's
death, one of the greatest players of all time.

"The club would like to send its condolences to his family, friends, Benfica and Portuguese football in general."

Black Panther passes away

REUTERS, Lisbon

Portuguese great Eusebio, top scorer at the 1966 World Cup, died on Sunday from a heart attack at the age of 71 with the small Iberian nation mourning him as an "eternal symbol" of their football pride.

Regarded as one of the greatest footballers of all time, the player known as the "Black Panther", died after suffering cardio-pulmonary arrest early on Sunday morning.

He had been hospitalised several times in recent years with various health problems and had suffered a stroke in June 2012.

The death of the charismatic striker, who was idolised

throughout the Portuguese-speaking world and considered one of the game's greatest players was confirmed by former club Benfica and the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF). "Portugal is mourning. Eusebio, the King of Portugal's

1966 team and the eternal symbol of the country, national team and Benfica passed away," the FPF said in a statement.

Eusebio, whose full name was Eusebio da Silva Ferreira,

was European Footballer of the Year in 1965 but won global acclaim a year later at the World Cup in England, where his nine goals helped Portugal reach the semi-finals.

He earned 64 caps and scored 41 goals for Portugal

He earned 64 caps and scored 41 goals for Portugal, records that stood for almost two decades.

Nicknamed the 'Black Panther', Eusebio was a European Cup winner with Benfica in 1962 and played in three other finals, including the loss to Manchester United at Wembley in 1968. Eusebio helped Benfica to 11 Portugues championships

and later served as an 'ambassador' for the club. He scored more than 300 league goals for the Lisbon outfit. Eusebio hailed from Lourenco Marques, now Maputo, in colonial Mozambique and as a teenage prodigy was

colonial Mozambique and as a teenage prodigy was expected to join Benfica's great rivals Sporting Lisbon but changed his mind at the last minute.

Eusebio ended his career playing in the U.S. but returned to Portugal to various roles with Benfica and the Portuguese federation. He was referred to as the "O Rei" (the king) in his later years, enjoying widespread affection.

Barca back atop

REUTERS, Barcelona



Alexis Sanchez hit a hattrick as Barcelona swept aside Elche 4-0 to return to the top of La Liga on goal difference ahead of Atletico Madrid on Sunday.

Showing no sign of missing the injured Lionel Messi and rested Neymar, Barca took an early lead through Sanchez and Pedro made it 2-0 after 15 minutes. Xavi Hernandez missed a penalty at the

start of the second half before Sanchez added another and completed his hattrick with a free kick. "It was important to win and not make mistakes at home.

"It was important to win and not make mistakes at home. We scored good goals and worked hard. There are five tough months still to go," Pedro told reporters.

Barcelona play Atletico next weekend.

"We know it is going to be difficult and we will go step by step," Pedro added. "First we face Getafe in the [King's] Cup."

Barca and Atletico, who beat Malaga on Saturday, both have 49 points, eight more than third-placed Real Madrid who face Celta Vigo on Monday.

Elche could only hold out for seven minutes before the home side took the lead when Jordi Alba's dangerous cross from the left wing evaded the defence and Chilean Sanchez fire into the roof of the net.

The visitors were inches away from equalising when Yiadom Boakye crashed a drive against the post but it was only a brief respite. Barca pressed high up the pitch and with Elche's defence pushing up there were plenty of gaps to run into.

Cesc Fabregas's pass opened up the defence and Pedro finished clinically from an angle.

Earlier Vitolo, Carlos Bacca and Ivan Rakitic gave Sevilla a 3-0 win over Getafe that put them sixth in the table.

Swansea throw M United out

AFP/REUTERS, London



Wilfried Bony snatched a dramatic last-minute winner as Swansea City visited fresh misery on Manchester United with a shock 2-1 success in the FA Cup third round on Sunday.

Eleven points off the pace in the Premier
League, where they have already lost six games,
United crashed out at the first hurdle in the FA
Cup to give beleaguered manager David Moyes even more

problems.
Swansea took a 12th-lead through Wayne Routledge. The hosts equalised four minutes later, Javier Hernandez volley-

ing in a cross from Alexander Buttner.

Worse was to follow at the death, with Routledge lifting a cross into the box from the left and Bony powering home a near-post header to add a new chapter of disappointment to the tale of United's unravelling season.

West Ham United also fell in the third round on Sunday, crashing to an embarrassing 5-0 defeat at second-tier Nottingham Forest, but Chelsea and Liverpool both progressed against lower-league opponents.

Chelsea beat in-form Championship side Derby County 2-0, with Liverpool avenging their shock defeat by third-tier Oldham Athletic in last season's competition with a 2-0 success at Anfield.

Sunderland overcame third-tier Carlisle United 2-1 at the Stadium of Light to take their place in round four.

On Saturday, Premier League leaders Arsenal showed their class as they comfortably beat north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur 2-0 to book a fourth round spot in an electric atmosphere at the Emirates Stadium.

Arsenal joined fellow top-tier sides Everton, Southampton, Stoke City, Crystal Palace and Cardiff City. But seven-times winners Aston Villa crashed 2-1 at home to third tier Sheffield United in their third round tie.

