

# Kylian Mbappe and Erling Haaland the next big stars of football - but can they last the distance?

The two talented goalscorers have a long way to go to rival Messi and Ronaldo



Paris St Germain's Kylian Mbappe celebrates winning the French Cup this week. Reuters



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May 20, 2021

Europe is particularly hot on two players this summer – Kylian Mbappe and Erling Haaland.

Mbappe, whose father is from Cameroon and mother of Algerian origin, grew up in Bondy, in the suburbs of Paris. At PSG since 2017, the club will demand around £173 million (\$245m) for this valuable asset who can sprint at 38kmh and has been compared to Usain Bolt.

Haaland, of Scandinavian roots, was born in Leeds in England, where his father Alf-Inge played. At Dortmund since January 2020, they will want £150 million to let him go. His 1.94m height does not hinder his excellent technique, co-ordination and speed. He's an area killer.

Mbappe, at 22, and 20-year-old Haaland are already marked as the stars who will light up the next generation. Recently French sports newspaper *L'Equipe* published a front page calling them 'galactiques'.

Their talent is indisputable, but questions remain as to whether they will be able to replace the rivalry between Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, winners of 11 Golden Balls between them.

That doubt is justified.



Dortmund's Erling Haaland after winning the German Cup final on May 2021. EPA

Mbappe is a brilliant sprinter and dribbler, but lacks show-stopping consistency even though he is a World Cup winner. After dominating at Camp Nou against Barcelona, he went missing four days later as PSG were beaten at home by Monaco, and was labelled 'Le Flop' by *Le Parisien*.

Haaland displays a calculating coolness in the area and has a vast repertoire of movement. Carrying the ball with ease and being a target man using his height, he is difficult to contain. The power that comes out of his left foot and his penalty expertise make him close to the complete package as a modern No 9.

However, analysts have doubts on how a 1.94m player who weighs 90kg can enjoy a career without major injuries.

Football embraces two types of superstars; those who dazzle with their skills (think Diego Maradona, Zinedine Zidane and Andres Iniesta) and those who reach the pinnacle essentially through goals (Pele, Marco Van Basten, the Brazilian Ronaldo, and Cristiano) though Messi shines in both.

Will Mbappe and Haaland be able to score 40 or more goals for more than a decade and become the next great rivalry – like Zidane and Ronaldinho, Messi and Ronaldo?

That is the big question.

Published: May 20, 2021 03:09 PM