

# postgame

TRANSFER MAGAZINE

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**TACTICAL BREAKDOWN OF THE  
BIGGEST JANUARY SIGNINGS**



# Haaland

#17

“The Best Pickup of The 2020 January Transfer Window”

CRAIG BURLEY

“The goals are great; but what impresses me for one who’s so young, and he’s done it at his previous club, is the composure. The composure for one who’s so inexperienced in the modern game, is phenomenal.”

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Ever since the departure of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang in the 2017-18 season, BVB has struggled to fill the void he left behind (ESPN). Dortmund at first attempted to bring in the likes of Michy Batshuayi on loan and then acquired the young, bright Spaniard in Paco Alcacer to compensate for their loss. Despite good performances from both Batshuayi and especially Alcacer, who led BVB in goals last season with 18 in 26 appearances, the gap was still evident, even with a promising show of strength from both Marco Reus and Jadon Sancho (ESPN).

Following their tough season with the absence of Auba, BVB has gone to great lengths to turn their club into legitimate title contenders. Finishing with a disappointing 15-10-9 record in 4th place during their 2017-18 season, BVB narrowly missed seizing the title last year from FC Bayern, coming up only three points shy (ESPN). Midway through January, BVB found themselves sitting once again in 4th place and only 3 points away from Bayern in 2nd (ESPN). Although the pressure was building again, Dortmund knew just how important it was to not let up on their pursuit for a Bundesliga Title. To accomplish that, they needed a new Aubameyang, someone who’s lust for scoring goals is relentless and unyielding. And BVB have finally found the right man for the job.

Borussia Dortmund matched FC Red Bull Salzburg’s release clause of \$20 million euros and signed the 19-year-old, Norwegian starlet Erling Haaland to a four-year deal that will last until June 2024 (B/R). This kid has been nothing short of phenomenal and could be the next Harry Kane of the Bundesliga. With a towering 6’4” stature, Haaland has an unreal gift to score at will from wherever and whenever he pleases within the 18-yard box. And at the helm of a developing, talented BVB squad, Erling Haaland has the ability to bring this team to glory and resurrect Dortmund back into the powerhouse club they once were.

What remains to be astonishing however, is that scoring goals for Haaland appears to be an innate skill that he’s honing more and more every year. Already at the young age of 17, playing with Norwegian club Molde FK, Haaland scored an impressive 12 goals on 12 shots in 17 starts (ESPN).

Once he jumped ship to RB Salzburg, he wasn’t given the necessary playing time to exhibit his talent up until this season, this time bagging 16 goals on 16 shots and grabbing another 8 goals in 4 games in the Champions League group stage (ESPN). Moreover, the most thrilling part about Haaland is that he hasn’t slowed down one bit -- on January 18th, Haaland made his debut for BVB as a substitute in the 56th minute and scored a phenomenal hat trick to not only tie the match, after being down 3-1, but also guide them to victory by punching in their 5th goal of the game (ESPN).

But it doesn’t stop there; Haaland then followed this incredible debut with yet another stunning performance six days later in their next match. Entering the game with a 3-1 lead in the 65th minute, Haaland snagged his first of two goals in 12 minutes, solidifying a 5-1 victory once again for Dortmund (ESPN).

At this rate, it’s hard not to expect this trend to continue throughout the remainder of the season. Haaland has already unleashed five goals in his first two games, a new Bundesliga all-time record (ESPN). Following this feat, Haaland has started every game since, continuing his scoring ways by tallying another 3 goals in 3 games played, extending his total to 8 goals in five matches (ESPN).

His lanky pace and big strides grant him a quickness that is frequently not found with tall, lumbering strikers. Moreover, his dribbling skills and sync with the ball is top class for his position and large frame. It’s important to understand that dribbling specialists tend to be short because they have a center of gravity that’s closer to the ground. The taller you are, the harder dribbling gets, and Haaland has certainly shown that he’s an exception to that rule. Obviously, Haaland’s greatest gift is shooting; from his power, to his accuracy, but above all else, the spin he can inflict on the ball is simply miraculous. If you haven’t already, open up YouTube and take a look at his second goal in his match against FC Cologne on January 24th -- facing the right side of the goal, merely a foot away from the goal line, Haaland was able to gently hook his shot into the bottom left-hand corner of the goal.

Nothing fazes Haaland when he finds the ball at his feet. When his eye’s and mind lock in on the net, he becomes a deadly finisher that is never denied. Signal Iduna Park is debatably the Mecca of football and is home to some of the most loyal, passionate and boisterous fans in the world. And to see how poised and calm Haaland has played in BVB so far, illustrates just how disciplined and special he really is.

With their eyes set on a Bundesliga Title, only down one point from 2nd place Bayern, BVB also find themselves facing PSG in the Round of 16 in the Champions League (ESPN). They have realized just how vital it is for their club to capitalize on the current position they are in and knew that they needed to act on that now. With the January transfer window in the books, BVB can comfortably look back and say that they secured the best transfer of 2020 so far, and my goodness, is Erling Haaland showing everyone just how invaluable he truly is.

# Christian Eriksen

Internazionale Milano, commonly known as Inter Milan, is one of the biggest powerhouses in Italian Football. Tied in 2nd place with the most league titles alongside their bitter rival AC Milan with 18 each, Inter have not hoisted the league trophy since 2010. Coming off a historic period where Inter won five straight Serie A Titles from the 2005-06 season to the 2009-10 season, the next seven years were a rollercoaster ride for Inter Milan fans as their team struggled to find direction and rebuild a new foundation for the future (ESPN).

Whether it was lapses in their scoring output or their shaky backline, inconsistency became the name of their game and you could pretty much flip a coin to see which of the two issues would surface as the main problem every year; sometimes it was a combination of both.

Although the offensive production was rocky throughout this past decade (outside of Mauro Icardi), the bigger discrepancies that made life difficult for Inter was with their defense. Starting in 2011-12, they were 15th in goals against, 19th the following season, 3rd in 2013-14, and then 9th the season after (ESPN).

It wasn't until the 2017-18 season that Inter finally began to take shape with a formidable structure and group on defense that they began to gradually build upon. In 2017-18, they were 4th in goals against, placing in 2nd the year after and are currently sitting in 2nd once again this season with only 22 goals allowed, just one goal shy from 1st.

However, that was only part one. On offense, Inter lost their longtime striker and main scorer in Mauro Icardi to PSG last year on loan with the option to buy (B/R). Without a dominant scorer to spur their offense, they decided to sign Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku last summer to assist and guide their new Argentinian youngster Lautaro Martínez with the striking duties.

Half way into the season, Inter are playing their best football in years with a 16-6-2 record, only a few points shy from Juventus who've won the title for the last eight straight seasons (ESPN). With their defense in check and a front attack capable of scoring at least a couple of goals per game, Inter realized that the only adjustment left was to bolster a midfield that's fluctuated in talent over the years and has had a tough time producing a formula built for sustainability. And it appears that Manager Antonio Conte certainly made it his New Year's resolution to change that during the 2020 transfer season.

After signing two winger-backs in both Ashley Young from Man United and Victor Moses on loan from Chelsea, who bring great pace, cross the ball well and play strong defense along the flanks, Inter topped off their shopping spree by acquiring the 27-year-old Danish midfielder Christian Eriksen from Tottenham Hotspur (GOAL). After settling on a \$20 million-dollar transfer fee, Inter signed Eriksen to a contract that will last until 2024 (B/R).

Considering how young and talented the Dane truly is, this transfer remains to be the biggest steal of 2020. Take Paul Pogba's transfer to Man United from Juventus in 2016: They acquired him for over \$115 million dollars and he ended up not nearly making the impact United had expected from him (ESPN).

To get Eriksen at \$20 million is a dream come true for Inter, securing a player that has immense potential and influence on offense to push Inter back into its powerhouse position once more.

What Eriksen brings in scoring and dribbling, is multiplied threefold by his creativity, skill, and precision he inflicts on the ball whether it's his passing, crossing or long-range set pieces outside of the box.

Alongside a sturdy and a complete midfield unit highlighted by Marcelo Brozovic, Nicolò Barella, Matías Vecino, and Antonio Candreva, Eriksen has the space and support system to excel at what he does best: commanding the center-attacking midfield position by setting up beautiful opportunities and sniping shots from deep.

Prior to leaving Tottenham, Eriksen was a Hotspur for seven full seasons and during his time there, became an integral part to their recent success in climbing into the Top 4 ranks (ESPN).

To give you an idea statistically, Eriksen put up double digit assists for four straight seasons from 2015 to 2019, placing 2nd in the league with a career high 15 assists in the 2016-17 season, just 3 shy from Man City's Kevin DeBruyne (ESPN).

But it doesn't end there; from his debut with Tottenham till his departure this January, Eriksen led the league in assists with 62, led in chances created with 571, and led in goals scored outside of the box with 23, uncannily enough (Postgame India).

Despite this statistical output, Eriksen does not play the game for individual glory and recognition, which is why he's such a special asset for any club.

Eriksen's impact is typically not reflected through statistics but rather through his ability to run an offensive system with fluidity, pristine passing, unwavering composure and hawk-like, playmaking vision that grants him tremendous awareness on the pitch.

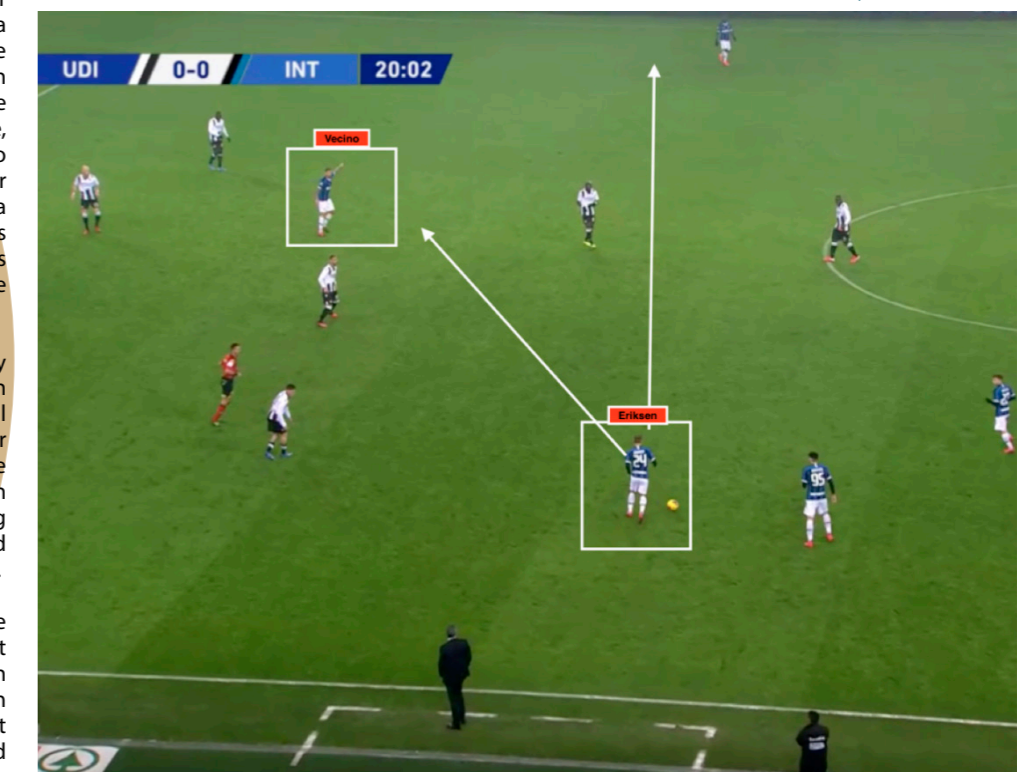
Inter needed a maestro to lead their midfield, and they fulfilled just that by getting Christian Eriksen.

After making his debut as a substitute in their 2-1 victory against Fiorentina in the Coppa Italia, Eriksen got his first start in their following Serie A match on February 2nd against Udinese where he helped Inter get their first Serie A victory since January 6th (ESPN). In an interview with Inter TV following Eriksen's 30-minute debut at the San Siro against Fiorentina, Antonio Conte expressed plenty of optimism about his newest acquisition:

"I think it was a positive performance because he only trained with us yesterday. I chucked him into action today. I don't usually do that sort of thing because I prefer when the player can take in our ideas, understand his role and what we want, but we needed to do that today. I also know he's an intelligent player. He's able to get himself in the right position tactically. He still needs to know about our movement and which positions he should take up, but he's shown a glimpse of the player I already knew, having faced him many times when he was at Tottenham. He's a player with character, who boosts our level of experience and quality in midfield."

Even though we have yet to really see how Eriksen transitions into his new role with his new team in a completely different league, it's safe to say that Inter's offense got significantly better after his arrival to the point that winning the Serie A Title this year could be a likely possibility. Inter Milan have progressively developed this team to what they are today over the course of the last three years. Bringing Eriksen in to kick off the new decade, might just be the final step Inter needs to reemerge as the dominant dynasty they once were a decade ago.

Positional play can be seen in the above image but with Eriksen operating in the right half-space. As Vecino is positioned in between the lines. With this positioning and quick technical execution, Eriksen helps Inter progress the ball from multiple areas of midfield.



## 'OLIVIER DUMONT'

"After Quite the Spending Spree, Inter Milan Might Have Executed the Biggest Steal Of The 2020 Transfer Market."



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