Dortmund, 15 May 2011. A city in the mood for celebration. The main B1 road, usually jammed with cars, is closed to traffic and lined with crowds instead. In total an estimated 400,000 fans have turned out to watch the open-topped bus parade through the city to mark Borussia Dortmund's seventh German championship.

It is a parade that begins at Borsigplatz in the north of the city where, at the Zum Wildschütz tavern in 1909, the club was founded. A song has been written to commemorate these roots, and the tune captures the mood of the parade. *'Rubbeldikatz, rubbeldikatz, rubbeldikatz am Borsigplatz!'* The words might be unusual – 'rub the cat in Borsigplatz'[1] – but the tune, written by club legend Alfred 'Aki' Schmidt and the band Casino Express, is infectious. It feels like it's got the entire city on its feet. Even when it starts to rain, nothing can dampen the mood.

On the team bus, joining in the mass singing, is Dortmund's charismatic manager, Jürgen Klopp. Having slept only a couple of hours, Klopp hides his tired eyes behind mirrored aviators. His croaky voice betrays the hearty celebrations of the previous night, but his enthusiasm is undimmed. Klopp, who during his playing career only ever experienced the *Bundesliga* as a spectator, is manager of the German champions.

Standing next to Klopp, microphone in hand, is Dortmund's stadium announcer Norbert Dickel, the 'Hero of Berlin' from their

1989 DFB Cup triumph (the German equivalent of the FA Cup). Does Klopp have a quick greeting to the fans, already waiting for their hero in front of the Westfalenhallen, where the parade will culminate? 'This is just the warm up,' Klopp promises. 'We'll be right there, then we're going to have some fun. But first, we have to practise penalties!' As he does so, he holds aloft a handwritten sign that was handed to him, recommending exactly that. During a season of remarkable success, there had been one strange statistical anomaly: Dortmund had been awarded five penalties and missed every one of them.

Such was the volume of fans lining the streets, it took hours for the team bus to arrive in front of the Westfalenhallen. One by one, the players took to the improvised stage and received the tumultuous applause of the supporters. As Klopp took to the stage, a song specially dedicated to him by the singer Baron von Borsig blasted over the tannoy: *Kloppo, du Popstar*. Klopp's vocal cords were strained by the effort of talking over the noise: 'You'll have to be a bit quieter,' he told the cheering fans, 'my voice isn't so good right now. There's a good reason for that. Unbelievable, unbelievable day, an unbelievable fortnight [since Dortmund were declared champions].' Then he joined in the fans' chant: 'There's one and only champion of Germany, BVB, BVB!' (BVB is short for the full name of the club: Ballspielverein Borussia 09 e.V. Dortmund.) When Bayern Munich won the title in 2010, Louis van Gaal called himself a *Feierbiest* – a 'party monster'. In Jürgen Klopp, he had a worthy successor.

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The contrast with the club's position a few years earlier could not have been starker. In 2002, Dortmund was a city still used to

success: Champions League and Intercontinental Cup victories in 1997, *Bundesliga* champions in 1995 and 1996, UEFA Cup finals in 1993 and 2002. It seemed inevitable that the trophy cabinet in the Westfalenstadion would grow ever fuller. But then the club had flung money at sporting success and things had got out of hand. BVB had teetered on the brink of bankruptcy – not just in intensive care, but 'being readied for the autopsy', to quote one report. A complete meltdown was averted at the last minute, but the sporting development of the team was crippled as a result. The club had been saved because the creditors agreed to a rescue package, but the budget cuts left the team a shadow of its former self in the following seasons.

The sporting architect of the success story was Jürgen Klopp. Within three years, he had transformed an average, mid-table team into national champions. A charismatic and meticulous coach, he was described by Dortmund's sporting director as 'my best transfer'. The comparison with the previous Dortmund title-winning team was stark: while the champions of 2002 were a side filled with experience and international stars such as Tomáš Rosický, Jan Koller and Amoroso, Klopp's BVB was youthful and dynamic, boasting home-grown stars like Mario Götze and Kevin Grosskreutz. When he arrived in Dortmund, Klopp had promised 'full throttle football' – and he had kept his word.

The last time Dortmund had been champions in 2002, there had also been joyous celebrations in the city. But the 2011 vintage was something different. These were scenes that weren't planned, weren't expected and that no one had even dared hope for. There was an emotional bond between the players and the fans that hadn't been there before: an enormous wave of enthusiasm that reached far beyond the Ruhr metropolis itself. Klopp's Dortmund

was a young team that had given everything in every game – a commitment to the cause that a whole nation could identify with. It would probably be fair to say that in 2011, the city of Dortmund cheered for its heroes more enthusiastically than ever before.

The triumph of Klopp and his team gave the city a reinvigorated sense of pride and self-respect. Dortmunders define themselves through the success of their football club in a way that only the other inhabitants of the industrial – or post-industrial – Ruhr understand. This is a city that has struggled with high levels of unemployment – 13 per cent at the time of the 2011 *Bundesliga* success – and which makes sporting success for the city all the more meaningful.

Klopp was well aware of the responsibility that put on his shoulders. Asked about his motivation early in his time as manager, he said, 'What we can do is give people a distraction, make people happy. […] I can't do anything to improve the political circumstances, I can't change anything about the social reality – but we can give these people a moment of happiness.' This attitude is why so many of the fans loved Klopp. And why, with Borussia Dortmund, Jürgen Klopp found his second sporting love after Mainz 05.

Some of the Dortmund fans took their love of their manager further than others. In Spring 2011, die-hard BVB fan Martin Hüschen had a portrait of a shouting Klopp tattooed onto his back. Such was his faith in Klopp's managerial ability, he then added a second tattoo of the *Bundesliga* trophy, even before the title had been confirmed. The finished artwork covered the entire upper half of his back.

As Hüschen put it, Klopp was a 'great guy' who 'fits right in with the Dortmund way'. When asked about his thoughts on the tattoo, Klopp's response was that 'He's old enough. He knows what he's doing.'

The 2011 league title was just the beginning for Klopp's Dortmund side. Not only did the club defend the title in 2012, they won the double for the first time in the club's history with a rollicking 5–2 win over Bayern Munich in the DFB Cup final.

Dortmund had been reinvented as a major player both in Germany and on the European stage – the club's trademark black and yellow kit synonymous with attractive football on the pitch and a well-run club off it. Such was his influence in the club's success that when Jürgen Klopp announced his plans to leave the club at the end of the 2014–15 season, his name was inevitability linked with every high-profile managerial job going.

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In October 2015, months of speculation about his career plans ended when Jürgen Klopp was announced as the new manager of Liverpool Football Club. As he adjusts to the challenges of life in the Premier League, it's time to get to know him a little better – both as a football person and also as a man. What qualities made him such a beloved, cult figure, not just for Borussia Dortmund supporters, but across Germany? How could the 'People's Manager' explain the intricacies of the game to millions of Germans in a language that non-experts could understand? What were reasons behind his era of success at first Mainz and then especially Dortmund – and now, for Liverpool fans, hopefully at Anfield as well? What drives him and how did he become a league-winning manager?

This book will attempt to answer these questions and many more. It paints a revealing portrait of Klopp's personality, the story of his career, his working methods and his tactical philosophy. This biography follows Klopp's progress first as a player, and then as a manager: it is not a history of his private life, but a study of his

sporting and human character. As well as those with knowledge of the game, it draws on insights from experts who offer their own perspective from outside the world of football.

Klopp himself did not contribute to this book. Yet many companions from his early years get a chance to speak here, offering an objective view of his character and approach to life. They show that the superficial 'Jürgen Gob' cliché has little basis in reality, and that Klopp is much more than just a man-manager in a tracksuit.

This book takes us through the various stages of Klopp's footballing life, and reveals just how much he loves the game. It chronicles how he started as a youth player in Glatten, then became a second division pro; it explores his switch to management and a decade-and-a-half managerial career (so far), during which Klopp has created a persona all his own.

Jürgen Klopp is one of the leading football managers in the world – and also one with much more still to give. As he said himself, winning the *Bundesliga* title in 2011 was like 'winning a stage in the Tour de France'. There will be many more challenges before he finally reaches the Champs-Élysées, but his is a managerial career whose upward curve feels inevitable. This book will explore the rise and rise of this remarkable manager – a life that began in an idyllically situated spa town in the Black Forest …

2

YOUNG KLOPP

The sun shines through the open door of the Linde (The Lime Tree). It lights up the salt and pepper shakers on the tables, beaming the patterns onto the flagstones. Diners use them to flavour their roasts and their Wiener schnitzels with chips and salad. The portions are generous, they need to 'squeeze it down' as they say around here. Outside the bar are a couple of plastic tables. A handful of men from Glatten, Neuneck and Böffingen sit around them, smoking their way silently into the evening. The two 'lime trees' in front of the Linde are not limes at all, but oaks. But no one seems to have noticed.

Welcome to Glatten, a small, idyllically situated spa village in the heart of Germany's Black Forest. The village gets its name – and its existence – from the River Glatt that runs through it.'Glatt' is derived from the old High German word '*glat*' (or '*glad*'), meaning 'clear, shining, pure'. The River Glatt is formed from the rivers Ettenbach, Stockerbach and Kübelbach in nearby Aach, a suburb of Dornstetten. It flows first south, then east, finally joining the River Neckar twenty-two miles downstream at Neckarhausen. Watermills and sawmills were built along its course, along with tanneries and breweries. Forestry and timber rafting depended on it: without the river, there would have been no way to transport the timber. The parish's coat of arms, appropriately enough, is a four-spoked waterwheel with a dozen blades on a field of red and silver.

Everything is uphill around here. At 530 metres above sea level, Glatten is low down for a village in the northern Black Forest. So the children who go to high school in Dornstetten or even Freudenstadt need a bike at least, or better a moped, or they have to take the bus. If they want to go to the cinema, the closest is in Freudenstadt. Or if they want to go for a night out, there's the Barbarina in Freudenstadt, or the Scotch Club or the youth club in Dornstetten, or the Ranch in Neuneck. All but one of the local men around the Linde tables are quick to swear on their mothers never having been in the Ranch. The description of what happens down on the Ranch is restricted to a rapturous expression, an 'ooh, aah', a raising and lowering of hands, accompanied by more oohs and aahs.

Since the parishes of Böffingen and Neuneck were incorporated into Glatten in the 1970s, the village has had around 2,300 inhabitants. An Alemannic grave field has been found here. In 1817, forty-nine impoverished *Glattemer* – as the locals call themselves – were sent to America at the cost of the parish; one child died on the way to New Orleans. Since then times have changed: by 1904 the village already had electric street lighting. Glatten certainly isn't poor anymore, and is a desirable and enticing place to live.

The centre of the village is Latschariplatz – from the Alemannic dialect traditionally spoken in the Black Forest region. There's a fountain here, above the Bürgenbach beck, where the local teenagers meet up, chew gum, spit on the ground, smoke, and flick their fag ends into the beck where the trout swim. There are disposable knives and forks floating in the beck as well, quite possibly from Glatten's kebab shop, and if the teenagers are feeling particularly full of bravado, their beer bottles too. The fountain is a meeting point: this is also where the squad of the sports club Sportverein

Glatten Kreisliga gather before away matches. The youth teams too. It seems like the fountain is *the* place to be in Glatten.

Also in the centre of Glatten is the Hotel Schwanen ('The Swan'). And opposite this once stood the Reich brewery. This belonged to the family of Jürgen Klopp's mother, Liesbeth, the reason why this future football manager had a Black Forest beginning to his life.

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Jürgen Klopp was born in Stuttgart in June 1967 and grew up in Glatten. His mother Liesbeth had her roots in the village, while Klopp's father, Norbert, originally a furrier by trade, moved to Glatten from Dornhan. Norbert then started work for Fischer-Dübel in Tumlingen (Artur Fischer, born in Tumlingen in 1919, invented the plastic wall plug in 1958). Those who knew Norbert Klopp say that he was an elegant man: capable, a good salesman, confident, a man who treated children with respect – and whose influence and encouraging of his son's footballing career was absolute.

The house where Klopp grew up is right next to the smart new town hall and the primary school – Klopp only had to cross the street to get to class. Today, a black and yellow flag hangs from a window: the flag has nothing to do with his mother or sister, who still live here, but with a tenant. The tenant must be the only Borussia Dortmund fan in the village. Traditionally, *Glattemer* are either Bayern Munich or Schalke supporters. It's like some ancient feud with the next parish: no one remembers who started the argument, back in the grey and misty past, but that doesn't mean there will be peace any time soon.

The young Klopp, by contrast, supported the team of his birthplace: VfB Stuttgart. He had a small attic room under the roof of his parents' house: it was full of Stuttgart pennants and the bed

was placed where the roof pitched down, ready to bang your head. Those are the memories of Jens Haas, who lived next-door to the Klopps and played alongside Jürgen for SV Glatten up to Under-17 level. He remembers listening to the *Bundesliga* on the radio with an eleven-year-old Jürgen. Even then, he was analysing the Stuttgart manager's decisions: 'He's got to take Klotz off now.' That was the era of German greats such as Hansi Müller, the Förster brothers, Karl Allgöwer, Walter Kelsch and Helmut Roleder in goal. It was probably Jürgen Sundermann who took centre-forward Bernd Klotz off, or earned himself a hail of criticism if he hadn't heeded Klopp's advice. It might even have been Lothar Buchmann.

Such is the beauty of Glatten that many residents spend their lives here and many of those have fond memories of the young Jürgen. At the bakery, Bäckerei Trik, Gerhard Trik has pitched in for twenty-five years. It is a family business: Gerhard's brother, who's in his sixties now, and who greets his sibling with a curt, friendly grunt, is in charge. It is the last independent bakery that still bakes its own bread – each of the other bakeries in the village is part of a chain.

Gerhard Trik, who became the groundsman of local club SV Glatten and runs the clubhouse, remembers one occasion with Jürgen all too well. It was a Saturday sometime in 1974. The coaches from SV Glatten came round to the bakehouse at eight in the morning to see 'back-up' baker Gerhard Trik, because they knew he would have time at that hour, and wanted him to step in to drive them to Kirn. Their ordinary driver couldn't make it. The Under-19s were playing there. Trik let them talk him into it, and got behind the wheel. That's how it is in this village: people help each other out.

Along for the ride were Norbert Klopp and his eight-year-old boy, Jürgen. Klopp senior was known locally as a good tennis player and not bad at football either. He played with Turn- und Sportfreunden

Dornharn in the amateur league second division and had a trial with 1. FC Kaiserslautern. He played midfield for SV Glatten when they were short of players. He was ambitious when it came to his boy too. Especially when it came to his boy.

Having arrived in Kirn, the Under-19s game got underway. Klopp senior was watching the youth team play. Klopp junior tapped a ball across to Trik. Trik, not lazy, passed it back, and they continued knocking the ball back and forth. Then Trik slipped. The grass was wet, he says, and down he went, his ankle in a bad way. 'Get help,' said Trik, who was down on the ground and couldn't stand. Jürgen ran for help in a flash. After a medic arrived with a stretcher, Trik was taken to hospital. He walks with a limp now, has arthritis in his ankle, and that's why his hip hurts. Overcompensation. An early memory of Jürgen he'll never forget.

Other *Glattener* have fonder memories. Astrid Wissinger was a classmate of Jürgen's and has a school photo, framed, from the mid-seventies, when they were ten or eleven years old. She can't put a name to the teacher, though remembers that she always read *Jim Knopf und die Wilde 13*, a Michael Ende story, to them. She looks very young. It's a very seventies photo: they're all wearing nice jumpers and look like very well-behaved children. They're all holding very still. You can spot Klopp – everyone called him 'Klopple' ('little Klopp') back then – in an instant.

There were forty-five pupils in the first primary-school class. 'It only worked because we all loved going to school, and the pressure wasn't so bad then as it is today,' says Astrid, and she ought to know: she has a child going to school. That said, there were teachers in Glatten primary school who would strike the children. 'With the side of the hand,' Astrid says as she demonstrates and the side of her hand cracks in the air.

There are twenty-three children in the picture. More girls than boys. 'She's still here, her too,' says Astrid, going through one by one. In total, twelve of the twenty-three still live in Glatten or nearby. Some of those who stayed never go further than Dornstetten or Freudenhaus. Astrid is one of those who does: there's a company called Wissinger, on the edge of the village just before the turnoff to Lombach, who make decals for cars, for motor racing too, and plastic wraps that protect vehicles from stone chips. One of their customers is Maserati.

Astrid recalls visiting Jürgen's mother Liesbeth and his sister Stefanie: 'We hadn't seen each other for twenty years, then we were sat in the kitchen half the night chatting away. It was all very nice and friendly.' Mrs Klopp told her the story of how Klopp senior had cleared out the living room to make a goal on the wall for three-year-old Jürgen to shoot at. 'Aim at the goal, boy, not at the glasses,' he had warned him.

After Borussia Dortmund won the *Bundesliga* title in 2011, there was a big victory party at Glatten's Riedwiesen sports centre. Such were the demands of those wanting to speak to him, Klopp needed three-quarters of an hour to eat a *bratwurst*, and he apologised for not having enough time for his school friends. 'This here, this is home, and that's cool,' Klopp told the crowd. Every now and then he slipped into Swabian dialect and the applause got even louder. It was still early when he had to start fending off tipsy guests in the beer tent who didn't want to go home, but he did it 'with style', says Astrid with a nod. Klopp's very clear when it's too much for him, when it's too cramped, when he needs time to himself. When he feels he needs to, he leaves. He's a man completely in control.

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The sports centre where the *Bundesliga* celebrations took place is the home of the local football team, SV Glatten. It opened in 1983, the last time SV Glatten played in the *Bezirksliga* – level eight of the German football pyramid. The nearest they came to returning was in that 2010–11 season, but in the end they could only manage third. They had another crack the following season, with player-managers Croatian Tomislav Gelo, thirty-five, and Bosnian Senad Sencho Kacar, thirty-nine. Both coaches had other jobs, receiving a little money on top for coaching. The rest of the team was 'local' as Gerhard Trik put it. It wasn't to be enough, and they finished a disappointing seventh.

The pitch itself is a verdant green. 'Like Wembley,' says Trik, 'but only if yew squint.' In truth, it is a swamp in winter, hard as stone in summer. 'What we have here,' Trik continues, 'is a pitch you need to put a tent over.' Today, the pitch is soft as butter, the Under-17s trained here yesterday, and have kicked whole clods out of the turf. Not intentionally, just in the normal course of training. 'The day will come,' Trik says, 'when we won't be able to play anymore, the risk of injury will be too big.'

'Riedwiesen needs to be properly fixed up – urgently,' says Trik. But the council doesn't want to pay and the club doesn't have the money. It would cost €130,000 to restore. Württemberg's sports foundation would put in 30 per cent, the council would have to take on some of the expense, but the club would still be stuck with making up the difference.

All the while, the ground gets its fair share of use. Training takes place here seven days a week. An average crowd of 100 to 150 come to the games to support the local teams. The *Glattemer* stand on the steep bank that rises up to Neunecker Strasse, the away fans stand opposite. Fortuna Köln and 1860 Munich have played practice

matches here. A crowd of 800 came to see a friendly between Mainz 05 and SV Linx – when Klopp was still playing for the former. During the 2011 celebrations, Klopp was asked if Dortmund were ever coming to Glatten. 'That might take a while,' was his answer: with not enough decent opponents in the area, practicality came before sentimentality.

None of the locals, Trik included, are sure whether Klopple ever played on the 'new' pitch (that's already thirty years old and counting), but the general feeling is that he probably didn't. Either way, in the clubhouse there are a couple of trophies in the cabinet, which Klopple helped win. Where Klopp definitely used to play was at the Waldplatz, the club's original pitch. All the teams, including the three women's teams, which train twice a week, rotate between the 'new' pitch and the 'old' one. The Waldplatz is especially popular in summer, it's nice and shady here, and you don't get that across the way.

The gate – neatly painted in the yellow and black of SV Glatten by Trik – is supposed to stop 'young people, middle-aged people, old people coming here in the night and getting up to nonsense'. The pitch, snug and secluded, is a place that begs you to get up to mischief. It's exactly what you imagine a Black Forest pitch to look like: lush green, surrounded by trees, with the stump of a fir tree on the touchline. Not long ago they set up a net to catch the balls flying towards the Lauter, the beck that rushes past five yards from the edge of the pitch. 'We were always losing balls in the Lauter,' Trik explains. Originally, there was a pole specially to fish them out. It wasn't too bad at low water, but when the beck was at its normal level, the ball had 'gone to the devil'. The way Trik pronounces 'devil' conjures images of Satan in football hell, having a kickabout with the damned – using balls from Glatten.

In front of the touchline stump the otherwise smooth, manicured turf is a little higgledy-piggledy and crumbly. There are little brown mounds of soil – moles have been digging their tunnels and pushing the spoil onto the pitch. The moles, of all things, manage to stir Gerhard Trik's blood – a man otherwise generously endowed with patience and poise. 'I'm fighting the moles with all available means,' he growls, counting them: poison and traps. He's put paid to one or two moles, but these molehills are fresh. 'They weren't there yesterday,' he says.

He'll have to get the traps out again. 'I don't like doing that while training's on.' He marks the place he's set a trap with a stick, but the kids pull them out and then the traps are lost because he has no way of finding them again. For Trik, there's no way of knowing how many of the enemy he has to face. 'Could be there's only the one, but blast, he's digging the whole pitch up,' Trik curses. Not that he's completely unsympathetic to his foe: 'In the fields, that's all right by me, but they ain't got no business on a football pitch.'

Like Gerhard Trik, Jan Haas both remembers Klopp growing up and is still involved with SV Glatten today. An engineer by trade, he trains the Under-9 team. There was no Under-9 team back when Jürgen and Jens started playing. The youngest side was when Ulrich Rath founded an Under-11 team in 1972, in order to have somewhere for his sons Ingo and Hartmut to play. Today, SV Glatten joins forces with other local clubs to put out youth teams in the higher age groups, as they wouldn't be able to get a team together on their own.

Children don't gather for kickabouts in the way they used to when Klopp and Haas were young. The kids have simply got too much to do in school these days, and no free time after school either. Stress, plain and simple. Haas recalls that, back in the early 1970s,

'either we were kicking the ball about, or training'. Football, every day. Homework? 'If at all possible, none at all,' he laughs. And if it absolutely had to be done, then it was done quickly and then out to play football. After playing, Klopp and his mates went down into the cellar of the Schweizers – another local family – and treated themselves to fizzy pop. During the title celebrations in Glatten, Klopp thanked the Schweizers once again for their hospitality. Who knows what might have been if it weren't for that fizzy pop?

The local boys all met at the fountain on their bikes, ball on the pannier: leather balls were no problem then, not like in Gerhard Trik's time, a generation before (leather balls and bicycles were still a rarity in those days). The rules of a kickabout works the same the world over: the players are picked in turn, and the best players are picked first. As Haas ruefully recalls, Klopp was a first pick and he wasn't. It was soon clear to the other boys that Klopple had talent. It was obvious to everyone by the time he was playing for the Under-13s.

When you play with someone who's 'got it', you start to realise how much more average you are yourself. The decisive thing Haas remembers about Klopp was that 'he never made it obvious. Sure he might have let out a few choice words during a game, but everyone did that at that age; he never got personal.' To this day, Klopp isn't the type to look for confrontation: he gets on with everyone and never makes anyone feel that they don't belong. He can see things through, but he does it in his own style, clear and polite. So while he criticised the Stuttgart manager when watching on television, he would never make the same comments directly to the SV Glatten manager. Besides, there was another managerial influence who had a strong bearing on his son. 'His dad was usually with him, any problems, any questions, he talked [them] out with him,' says

Haas. Even when Klopp junior was playing for Mainz in the second division, Norbert would drive down there and shout instructions onto the pitch. 'A powerful voice,' Haas noted.

To nobody's surprise, Klopp was team captain by the time the pair had graduated to the Under-15s. Klopp 'radiated composure', according to Haas. He was a 'central figure' who you could rely on 'in any situation on the pitch'. He was always open to receive the ball; you 'couldn't say a word against him, not as a footballer, not in how he carried himself'. When a lesser player like Haas started getting the feeling that things were going wrong, he would look over to Klopp, who would convey the opposite feeling. Was there anything Klopp wasn't good at? 'Losing,' answers Haas in a flash. Sparks would fly when that happened – a response none too different from that of Klopp the famous manager, well-known for giving his emotions full rein.

Haas remembers his teenage friendship with Klopp with affection. Both had mopeds: Klopp's was orange, a Vespa. 'Mine was faster,' says Haas. 'That peed him off, but he was sporting about it.' There was good-natured competition between them on the road; the mopeds were all souped up to give them an edge. Not that riding bikes came without its dangers: Astrid Wissinger remembers someone around their age who lost an arm in an accident and 'He was ruddy lucky it was no worse than that.'

Even though Klopp was team captain, even though he scored a hatful of goals for the Under-15s, even though he was selected for the local and regional elevens, Haas never imagined his friend would actually make it as a pro. Not even when he switched to the Under-19s at TuS Ergenzingen, a club in a small town fifteen miles to the east with a good reputation. It was a time when Klopp wasn't just changing clubs, but schools as well: he was one of three

Glattemer who made it to the grammar school in Dornstetten. For the first year or two, the ties to his school friends in Glatten stayed firm. Then, Haas noticed a 'parting of the ways'. It wouldn't be the final one. It had nothing to do with how they treated each other – it was a case of different paths rather than a change in the feelings they had for each other.

Today Haas finds himself watching his son, and how he reacts to Klopp on the TV, when he appears in adverts. 'He reacts just like he would to anyone else in an ad,' says Haas. For his son, this is Klopp: the impossibly distant figure on the Dortmund bench and on TV. For Haas senior, it's different. He knows two Klopps: 'When he does an advert on TV, he's a TV character. When he comes here to join in the festivities, he's my old school chum and teammate, and he asks me how I'm doing and I ask him.'

* * *

As soon as you enter Walter Baur's home, you know that a real football fanatic lives in this house. Brazilian and German flags fly from the balcony: the Brazilian for the academy player who also lives here. There are footballs in the garden, and lights on in the office where the nameplate on the door reads Baur. Inside, there's a tactics board on the floor, shelves filled with books, all of them about football: World Cup '74, modern defending, modern fitness training. There are jerseys on the wall, trophies on the desk. Hanging on the back of the door is a photo of the 1986 TuS Ergenzingen Under-19 team. It's not just any photo. Kneeling in the front row, in the bottom-right corner, with his blue shorts, yellow jersey, moustache and captain's armband, is the seventeen-year-old Jürgen Klopp.

Klopp's transition from captain of SV Glatten's Under-15s to under-19 captain of TuS Ergenzingen was not as smooth as it might

first appear. During the first year at the club, he spent most of the time in his tracksuit, warming the bench. Walter Baur, the coach, remembered Jürgen as no footballing prodigy. 'He couldn't do three keepy-uppies in a row,' he recalls with a chuckle. Pulling out a file, he flicks through it until he finds the player notes on Klopp for a particular match, TuS Ergenzingen against SSV Reutlingen. *Completely useless, didn't win a single tackle.*

In fact, it was more luck than judgement that brought Klopp to Ergenzingen. There was a Jürgen playing for SV Glatten who had piqued the interest of Hermann Baur, another youth coach at the club. But it was striker Jürgen Haug who'd made Baur sit up and take notice: the other Jürgen wasn't worthy of a single line. In the end, transport seemed to play a factor in the transfer. Joining TuS meant travelling twenty-five miles to training three times a week, there and back. It was Klopp's father Norbert who was willing to make the journey. Even today, Klopp still has the feeling that his dad's car was the most important factor in his transfer to TuS.

Making the journey was just the beginning of the travails for Jürgen. Once there, there was a lot of time for a detailed personal critique. Klopp senior was Jürgen's biggest critic, a perfectionist who expected 100 per cent from his son. It drove him to achieve more. 'Jürgen was very grateful for his father driving him to training, and he wanted to repay him. He was incredibly ambitious,' Baur recalled. But Klopp was always eager to learn. He was the one who paid close attention to both his father and Baur, while his teammates would chat among themselves during team talks in the dressing room. Klopp remembers some of Baur's sayings to this day.

After the team talk, Klopp would go out and try to juggle the ball. 'After half a year, we had players at the Christmas party, they were like seals. They sat down with the ball on their heads and

stood up with it balanced there.' Klopp would never be a 'seal', but he didn't stop learning. By his second year in the Under-19s he was captain – and not just on the pitch. He organised the Christmas do and the team parties. He was a hit with the local girls too. The lanky lad – 'Schlacks', as Baur called him – had a lot of female admirers. Jürgen met his girlfriend at a party in Ergenzingen.

Klopp's determination to win was clear. At one traditional Whitsun Under-19 tournament, Klopp and the boys fought their way to the final, to meet the Czechoslovakian participants Vitkovice Ostrau for the trophy. The score stood at 0–0 after normal time – it would go down to a penalty shootout. Baur wanted to let the 'poor Czech boys' win. Klopp's response was simple. 'Are you crazy? They're all going in the back of the net.' Sure enough, at the trophy presentation, it was Klopp who lifted the cup to the heavens.

That was Klopp's last act as a youth player. His first as a senior was soon to follow. When he found out that local rivals VfL Nagold were hunting his signature, the eighteen-year-old went straight to the TuS board and demanded that his Under-19 coach Baur take over the first team. He did, so Klopp stayed.

In July 1986, *Bundesliga* team Eintracht Frankfurt came to the Breitwiese in Ergenzingen to play a friendly. In the team was Thomas Berthold, the Germany defender fresh from the World Cup in Mexico. Before and after the game, Berthold was hustled by autograph hunters. During the game, however, he was hustled by right-midfielder Klopp. 'Jürgen played out of his skin and got away from Berthold time after time,' said Baur. On top of this, he got the consolation goal that made the score 9–1.

Frankfurt manager Dietrich Wiese was astonished. 'Who's this lad?' he asked his friend Baur. Later on he would frequently ask how the 'lad' was progressing. And progressing Klopp was, outgrowing

the relationship and influence of Walter Baur. That winter he switched to lower league team 1. FC Pforzheim and from there he transferred to Eintracht Frankfurt Amateurs in the summer of 1987. The Ergenzingen club are said to have received the fantastic sum of 12,000 Deutschmarks from Pforzheim.

Though his career had moved on, Klopp and Baur kept in regular contact. When Klopp started his career as a manager in 2001, it was Baur whom he rang. It was 11.50 on Carnival Monday, the Monday before lent, when he called. 'Walter, guess who the new Mainz manager is?' Klopp asked. Baur got it wrong once, twice before Klopp revealed the truth. 'For the last ten minutes – me!' In 2008, when Klopp exchanged Mainz for Borussia Dortmund, Baur was coaching the Under-19s at VfL Nagold. Baur, who had scouted Mainz's opponents for Klopp, kept a lookout for good young players in southern Germany for the new BVB manager too. His finds included Lars and Sven Bender (1860 Munich) and Mats Hummels (Bayern Munich).

After the *Bundesliga* title was won, Baur wanted to send his congratulations. Yet before he called his former player, he contacted Klopp's assistant Željko Buvač, 'because no one thinks about him in all the euphoria'. A lot of people in Ergenzingen would like to see Klopp at their Whitsun tournament, and come back to do this or that. Baur is supposed to be the one to set that up. But he is protective of his former player, weighing up what is fair to ask of *Der Jürgen* and what is not.

'That wherever you were, you made it a little better. That you gave all you could. That you loved, were loved, and didn't take yourself too seriously.' This was Klopp's answer in 2008 when *Stern* magazine asked him what counted in life. Baur, certainly, is someone who never took himself too seriously. He didn't accept the invitation

to BVB's championship party. He was fighting a relegation battle in the *Oberliga* with his youth team, and had to go to the match against VfR Aalen. When the Under-19s were relegated, Baur wanted to retire from coaching. But he kept going. That is Baur through and through, giving all he can. Klopp gives all he can too – that's something he took with him from his time with Baur.

3

THE JOURNEY TO MANAGER

Jürgen Klopp's playing career following his move from Walter Baur's tutelage at TuS Ergenzingen was marked by a continual switching of lower-league clubs over the next few seasons. Having joined 1. FC Pforzheim in 1987, he switched a few months later to Eintracht Frankfurt, where he combined playing for the Amateurs with studying sports science and coaching the Under-13 side. In 1988, he continued his journeyman-player route by signing for Viktoria Sindlingen. The following year he moved on again, this time to Rot-Weiss Frankfurt, and by 1990 he had switched once more, this time to FSV Mainz 05. Only at this latter club did Klopp finally cement his position. Indeed, he would go on to play for Mainz for the whole of the next decade, as well as beginning his managerial career there.

The English football league structure has long been based on four national divisions. In 1990, they were still running under the 'old money' names of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Division. This was all about to change, of course, with the formation of the English Premier League in 1992 and the remaining Football League divisions eventually becoming the Football League Championship, Football League One and Football League Two. Unlike the English system, where there are a further two divisions before football becomes regional, with the National League North and South, the German football pyramid splits into regional divisions further up.

Since 2008, the German system has consisted of the two *Bundesliga* divisions, *Bundesliga* and *2.Bundesliga*, with a third national league, *3.Liga* beneath this. Feeding into this are then five *Regionalliga* divisions, with various local *Oberliga* competitions underneath.

Back in 1990, when Jürgen Klopp was a Rot-Weiss Frankfurt player, there was no third tier *3.Liga*. Instead, with Frankfurt having won the Hesse Regional League, they were entered into a six-game mini-league, Play-Off Group South, from which the winners and runners-up of both groups (north and south) achieved promotion to *2.Bundesliga*. As it turned out, Rot-Weiss Frankfurt didn't make it to *2.Bundesliga* on this occasion, but Klopp did. Rot-Weiss Frankfurt managed only a single point in six games – the group winners Mainz 05, beating them twice. Mainz's manager, Robert Jung, was impressed with the playing style of the then winger and signed him. 'I picked up on him because he was great in the air, and that's exactly what our squad was missing,' he later explained.

Although FSV Mainz 05 – Fussball und Sportverein Mainz 05 e. V. to give them their full name – have been a fixture in the *Bundesliga* in recent years, the club has for much of its history been more regularly found in Germany's second tier and lower divisions. Originally formed in 1905 as 1. Mainzer Fussballclub Hassia 1905, the club combined with FC Hermannia 07 to become 1. Mainzer Fussballverein Hassia 05, before joining forces in 1919 with Sportverein 1908 Mainz, forming 1. Mainzer Fussball und Sportverein 05, the basis of the modern club. The team plied their trade in various South West and Hesse Leagues (Hesse being the region in Germany) for several decades. When the *Bundesliga* was formed in 1963, Mainz's position was predominantly as a mid-table second division side. Financial difficulties led to them dropping out of the *2.Bundesliga* in the late 1970s, but a decade later they

returned briefly to the *2.Bundesliga* in 1988–89, before being promoted back into the division in 1990.

Klopp was brought to Mainz from Rot-Weiss Frankfurt as a striker. As a young player, his pace had been instrumental to his switch from amateur to professional football. Certainly, he was quick to make an impression with the Mainz fans. Right at the start of his Mainz career, the club faced Erfurt in the Steigerwaldstadion in August 1991. Klopp ran for everything, and everything ran for him. Klopp became was the first *Mainzer* to score four goals in a single game in the second division.

Klopp would play for Mainz for the best part of eleven years, making 325 appearances for the club and scoring fifty-two goals in the process. He switched position in the team on a number of occasions during this time. Like so many attacking players, the longer Klopp's career went on, the further back on the pitch he moved. Following on from his attacking role, manager Josip Kuze then moved him to the right of midfield. Subsequent manager Wolfgang Frank shifted Kloppo to the right side of defence for good.

No other Mainz 05 player has as many second-division appearances for the club as Klopp. In many ways, he was the perfect fit for this level of football, where effort, know-how and footballing acumen can be as important as raw ability. Looking back on his playing days, Klopp has wondered if he might have done better playing in England: 'I might have had a better career there. Pump it into the mixer and then get your head on it,' he pondered in 2002.

Wolfgang Frank felt that Klopp's limited technical ability was one of the reasons behind his emotional outbursts: 'Sometimes he lost control out on the pitch because he had so many good ideas in his head, but not the footballing talent to act on them. That wound

him up so much sometimes that I'd have to take him to one side,' he recalled in 2011.

As his playing career started to wind down, even the pacy Klopp couldn't avoid using some tricks of the trade. He became an old pro who could dish it out when necessary, but also had to take it on occasion, as illustrated by an altercation with the St Pauli midfielder, Bernd Hollerbach. The pair had a coming together during a match at the Millerntor stadium in Hamburg, as Klopp recalled in a 2002 interview: 'We'd broken clean away when Hollerbach caught me on the thigh on the halfway line and gave me a dead leg like you wouldn't believe. That was an injustice that no one saw, the whole stadium was jeering at me for simulation. Only two men knew the truth – me and Hollerbach. As a result, the next time I met Hollerbach on the pitch I made sure to show him what's what.' According to Klopp's Mainz teammate, midfielder Christian Hock, that was the footballing realities of the lower leagues in those days. 'OK, you had a lot of space on the pitch, but you always had a man marker chasing you down ready to hack your ankles.'

Klopp's competitiveness was clear on the training pitch as well. There was little team unity to witness when Klopp and Hock met in training. The contrast between the nippy left midfielder Hock at five foot eight and the lumbering right-back Klopp at six foot three made for an interesting contest: one owed his success to agility and a powerful left foot, the other to his strength in the air and dogged perseverance rather than any great technical ability. 'There were many occasions when we'd be having a go at each other the whole length of the pitch,' says Hock. 'Kloppo could be very impulsive.'

The impulsive behaviour could land Klopp in trouble. In summer 2005, Klopp agreed to be attached to a lie detector by the editors of *RUND* football magazine and was asked what his biggest

meltdown was. 'Shortly before I was made manager, I headbutted a very good friend of mine, Sandro Schwarz. He'd put me on the floor twice in training. I got up, all I could see was his face in front of me, and then he was down on the ground. I wanted to die, I just wanted to die, I couldn't bear the thought of what I'd done.'

* * *

For the first few seasons following Mainz's return to *2.Bundesliga,* the club's main goal was simply to survive. This was a time when the threat of relegation was a constant premise. Somehow, each season, Mainz survived by the skin of their teeth, ready to do battle to stay in the division the following season. It was a sequence that couldn't go on. After a terrible start to the 1995–96 season, with the opening seven games resulting in one point, no goals scored and thirteen conceded, the Mainz manager Horst Franz was shown the door.[2]

Enter Wolfgang Frank. Frank was born in 1951 and during his playing career, he was a centre-forward for teams including Stuttgart and Borussia Dortmund. He was a particularly good header of the ball despite standing at only five foot eight. Before taking charge of Mainz he had managed in Switzerland and at Rot-Weiss Essen, then in the second division. Despite being a *2.Bundesliga* team, Frank took them to the final of the 1994 *DFB-Pokal* – the German Cup – where they lost 3–1 to Werder Bremen at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin.

Wolfgang Frank lived and breathed football like few others and his influence on the Mainz players was clear both immediately in the club's performances and in the number who later followed him into coaching. Many of those who sat through the long team meetings went on to become managers themselves after their playing careers ended. 'That's definitely no coincidence,' says Christian Hock. 'We