

Mbappe says mental shift helped change his Real Madrid situation

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Madrid, January 21 (RHC)-- Real Madrid striker Kylian Mbappe believes a shift in mentality has helped him improve his "situation" in the Spanish capital after his initial struggles following a dream move from Paris Saint-Germain.

The French superstar played inconsistently in his first months at Madrid after joining last summer, but in recent weeks has returned to his devastating peak.

“You always have to be calm and focus on your game and what you can improve,” Mbappe told a news conference on Tuesday ahead of Madrid’s Champions League clash with RB Salzburg.

“I knew that I could change the situation, and now the situation has changed.”

Mbappe missed penalties against Liverpool and Athletic Bilbao towards the end of 2024 and admitted at the time that he had “hit the bottom”.

The 26-year-old pledged to show his personality and overcome his shaky start, and now has scored eight goals in his last 10 games across all football competitions.

Just when it seemed the pressure of a lifelong dream switch to Real Madrid might prove too great for Mbappe to overcome, the French superstar silenced his doubters and now seems at home and ready to wreak havoc both in Spain and in Europe.

“It was more of a mental thing... I knew I was good physically, good with the team, the group, but I had to do more and I knew it,” continued Mbappe. “It was the moment to say that now I had to change everything, change the situation, because I didn’t come to Madrid to play badly.

“Now it’s all changed, and I have to continue, because playing well for a month is good, but it’s easy.”

During his spell of poor form and while struggling with a thigh problem, Mbappe was left out of several France squads for Nations League games in the final months of last year.

However, the striker said he was looking forward to returning to action with his country. “There’s no issue with the national team... I can understand the criticism [in France],” said Mbappe, who won the World Cup with France in 2018.

“I’m excited to return in March and try to reach the Nations League semifinals.

“My love for the national team has not changed.”

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti has been patient with Mbappe, often defending the forward and insisting he needed time to adapt to life in the Spanish capital and gel with his new teammates.

The Italian also stuck by his guns with regards to Mbappe’s positioning, insisting from the start of the season that the French hitman should play down the middle, leaving Vinicius Junior to stay on the left flank in his preferred role.

Mbappe and Vinicius struggled to gel, at times occupying the same spaces on the pitch.

Ancelotti persisted with the striker and said at the end of December that Mbappe had bedded in and, after a thigh injury, was now ready to perform at his best. “His [adaptation] period, which he obviously needed, because everyone needs it, is over,” said the coach.

“Where does Mbappe have to improve? Just in consistency ... trying to make the moves that only he can make, as often as possible.”

Mbappe’s skill and speed have made him unstoppable in recent weeks and he looks increasingly confident in himself with every passing match.

Mbappe produced arguably his finest display for Madrid as he netted a brace against Las Palmas on Sunday to help take Real to the top of LaLiga.

Vinicius was suspended against Las Palmas, but will return in the Champions League, and he and Mbappe must continue developing their partnership.

If Madrid's dynamic duo can find the same wavelength, they will be ready to defend their status as the kings of Europe.

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