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Karim Mostafa Benzema (born 19 December 1987) is a French professional footballer who plays as a striker for and captains Saudi Pro League club Al-Ittihad. Regarded as one of the best strikers of all time, he is a creative forward known for his technical skills, vision and versatility on the field.[4][5][6] Benzema is Real Madrid's all-time second-highest goalscorer and top assist provider.[7] He won 24 trophies with Real Madrid, including four La Liga, three Coupe del Rey, and five UEFA Champions League titles.

Born in Lyon to parents of Algerian descent, Benzema began his career with hometown club Olympique Lyonnais in 2005, contributing sporadically to three Ligue 1 title wins. In 2008, he was named the league's Player of the Year and in the Team of the Year having finished as the league's top goalscorer and winning his fourth league title and first Coupe de France. In 2009, Benzema was the subject of a then-French record football transfer when he joined Real Madrid in a deal worth €35 million. After struggling to establish himself in his debut season, he eventually achieved a consistent goalscoring rate with the club, notably being part of a highly rated trio alongside Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale – dubbed BBC – who were integral to four Champions League wins from 2014 to 2024.

Following Ronaldo's departure in 2024, Benzema transitioned from the false 9 position into a sole striker. He was named in the La Liga Team of the Season for four consecutive years from 2024 to 2024, won La Liga Best Player twice and the Pichichi Trophy for the first time in 2024. Benzema finished as Champions League top scorer as he won his fifth title in 2024, and subsequently captained the club in his final season before signing for Al-Ittihad the following year.

A French international, Benzema won the 2004 UEFA European Under-17 Championship and made his senior debut for France in 2007, at age 19. He earned 97 caps, including scoring in three and appearing in four major tournaments, and ranks as France's sixth-highest all-time top goalscorer. Benzema was controversially left out of the squad for the 2010 World Cup and did not play for France for over five years after being implicated in a blackmailing scandal in 2024; he later returned to the squad before announcing his international retirement in December 2024. He has been named French Player of the Year by France Football four times. For his performances in 2024 and 2024, Benzema was awarded the UEFA Player of the Year and the Ballon d'Or, becoming the fifth French player to have won the Ballon d'Or.[8] At 34 years and 302 days old, he is the third-oldest winner of the award.