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## Nestory Irankunda Signs Long-Term Deal with Watford from Bayern Munich

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Watford Football Club has completed the signing of Australian international Nestory Irankunda from Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich on a five-year contract. The 19-year-old winger, who earned his first cap for the Australian national team, the Socceroos, in June 2024, has joined the English Championship side for an undisclosed transfer fee. This move marks a significant moment for both Watford and the young talent as he looks to further his career in one of Europe's most competitive leagues.

Nestory Irankunda's rise through the ranks of professional soccer has been swift and impressive. Born in Tanzania to Burundian parents, Irankunda moved to Australia when he was just three months old. His multicultural background and unique upbringing helped

shape a player with technical skill and athleticism. Irankunda made his professional debut with Adelaide United at only 15 years old during the 2021/22 A-League season, becoming one of the youngest players in the league's history to do so. His performances quickly attracted attention, notably his standout display for an A-League select side against Spanish giants Barcelona, which showcased his potential on an international stage.

In June 2024, Nestory Irankunda made his debut for the Socceroos, the nickname for the Australian national soccer team. He scored his first international goal later that same month in a match against Palestine, highlighting his ability to perform at the highest level. This success facilitated a record transfer move to Bayern Munich, where he joined one of the world's most prestigious clubs.

Despite the prestige of playing for Bayern Munich, Irankunda's opportunities to feature regularly in the first team were limited. His last appearance for the Socceroos came in October 2024 during the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) World Cup qualifiers in a 3-1 victory over China. Since then, under current national coach Tony Popovic, he has not been called up, which some observers believe is due in part to the intense competition for places and the need for consistent club playing time.

Watford's Sporting Director, Gian Luca Nani, commented on the signing, emphasizing the club's belief in Irankunda's potential. "Nestory can be a very special player, and we believe he can realize his potential here, with us," Nani said. He added that the club's strong scouting network and relationships within the sport enabled them to secure a player who was highly sought after by multiple teams.

The English Championship is renowned for its physicality and competitiveness, offering a challenging environment for young players to grow. For Irankunda, this move represents an opportunity to gain regular minutes, develop his game, and demonstrate the talent that made him one of Australia's most promising prospects. For Watford, the signing aligns with their ambition to build a squad capable of challenging for promotion to the Premier League.