

Former England manager Steve McClaren has been sacked by German giants Wolfsburg, ending a disappointing eight-month reign in charge of the former Bundesliga champions.

"VfL have parted ways with Steve McClaren," the club said in a statement. "Pierre Littbarski is taking over."

"We were not convinced any more that we could work with Steve McClaren in a solid way until the end of the season," Wolfsburg general manager Dieter Hoeness said.

McClaren joined the Volkswagen-backed team in the summer, weeks after leading Dutch minnows FC Twente to a surprise Eredivisie title.

He has only won five of 21 Bundesliga matches and a 1-0 defeat at Hannover appears to have been the last straw, coming four games after a vote of confidence for the former Middlesbrough manager.

The club lies 12th in the 18-team Bundesliga, one point above the relegation play-off places.

The 2009 champions' latest disappointment came after Brazil midfielder Diego defied team orders by taking a penalty, which he subsequently missed.

The drama added to the belief that McClaren works better with younger, lesser-known players and that he struggles to man-manage top internationals.

In addition to his unprecedented success with Twente, McClaren won the League Cup with Middlesbrough, who he then took to the UEFA Cup final, where they were beaten by Sevilla.

But afterwards he struggled as England manager, failing to qualify for Euro 2008 and replaced by Fabio Capello soon afterwards.

McClaren kept his job at Wolfsburg in January, despite coming under mounting pressure for poor results, with fans initially blaming the board for not adding enough top players to the squad in the summer.

Recent weeks, however, saw fans protest against McClaren, with the poor run continuing despite January signings Patrick Helmes, Tuncay, Koo Ja-cheol and Yohandry Orozco compensating for the sale of Edin Dzeko to Manchester City.