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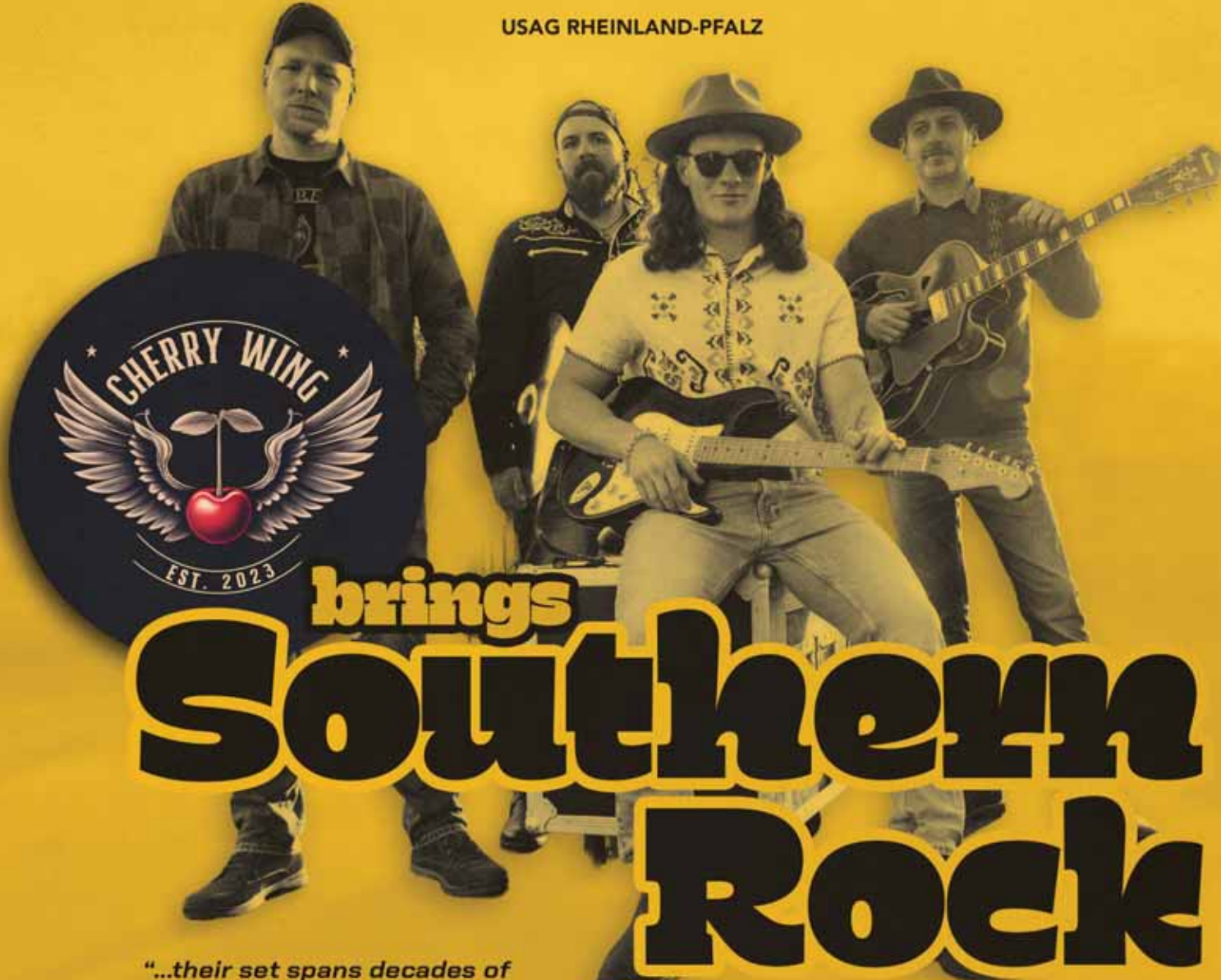
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# PLAN AHEAD

By Katie Wells



## BAVARIA

Tollwood Summer Festival, Munich | June 19 – July 19, 2026

This concert series event lasts an entire month. Held at **Olympiapark Süd**, the “Market of Ideas” will feature a vibrant array of live music from around the world, as well as theater and performance groups. You can shop at a handmade craft market and enjoy a variety of international food stands. Entrance to the Market of Ideas festival grounds, which includes music, theater, children’s entertainment and environmental activities, does not require a ticket. However, to see the main performers at the music arena, you will need to purchase a ticket, visit [tollwood.de](http://tollwood.de).



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## KAISERSLAUTERN

Kaiserslautern Classics | June 20, 2026

Auto aficionados can stroll through downtown Kaiserslautern and view vintage and classic cars for free. I happened upon this event one year when shopping and was awe-struck by the cool cars gathered. A couple of highlights will include cars from the **4th ADAC Trifels Oldtimer Rally**, organized by SUK. The rally will span over 240 km through the Westpfalz and Vorderpfalz regions. The **4th Vespa meeting in Kaiserslautern** will also take place. Enthusiasts of the Vespa meet and ride together into the city, where they can then present their motor scooter as part of the Kaiserslautern Classics event. [kaiserslautern.de](http://kaiserslautern.de).



## SPANGDAHLEM

Altstadtfest, Trier | June 26 – 28, 2026

At Trier’s Old Town Fest, visitors gather between Porta Nigra and Viehmarkt to listen to live music, enjoy cold drinks and eat delicious food. The festival begins with a Bitburger keg tapping at the main market square. Then, throughout the weekend, music fills the air as performances take place on five different stages. There will also be a cattle market, a foam party for all ages and a band contest. On the last day, fan favorite Guildo Horn will close out the festival with a lively performance, visit [trier-info.de/highlights/altstadtfest](http://trier-info.de/highlights/altstadtfest).



## STUTTGART

Science Day | June 27, 2026

For lovers of science, prospective students and parents, the **University of Stuttgart** opens its laboratories and lecture halls once a year. Visitors can partake in interactive demonstrations, experiments and labs. There will be lectures to attend and research displays for guests to see current projects involving cutting-edge science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Science is for everyone. In past years, activities have included a glowing bacteria and elephant toothpaste experiment as well as AI and simulation experiences. For the full program, visit [uni-stuttgart.de](http://uni-stuttgart.de).



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## WIESBADEN

Johannisnacht Festival, Mainz | June 19 – 22, 2026

Less than a half-hour drive from Wiesbaden, the “Midsummer Night” is one of Mainz’s largest festivals. The festival celebrates the memory of Johannes Gutenberg, inventor of the Gutenberg printing press. There will be an antiquarian book market on Schillerplatz and Ballplatz and an artists’ market along the Rhine. In front of the **Gutenberg Museum**, guests can create their own colorful works of art. Giant bubbles float through streets as street artists appear and perform with puppets, bagpipes, on stilts and more. In traditional festival fashion, there will be rides and fest food, visit [mainzer-johannisnacht.de](http://mainzer-johannisnacht.de). ■



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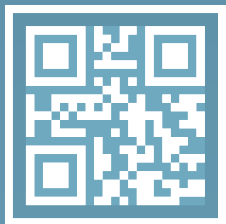


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By Kat Nickola

## KEEP YOUR EYES ON FOOTBALLER MONTRELL CULBREATH.

This 18-year-old was born in Landstuhl, Germany and holds both American and German citizenship.

He started playing football, or soccer, locally in the Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC) area at a young age including for the SV Spesbach Club and the youth academy at Football Club Kaiserslautern (FCK). As a teenager, he moved to Leverkusen, north of Cologne, to join their youth academy. In 2022, he briefly played with the U.S. men's national U16 soccer team before returning to play for the German U16 National team.

In December 2025, he made an exciting Bundesliga debut, playing for Bayer 04 Leverkusen, scoring a goal on his first night out and helping secure a 1-3 win over Leipzig. ■

## GERMAN WORD OF THE MONTH

**Der Hexenkessel** (noun) *HEK-sen-kes-sel*

Literal translation: Witches' cauldron

Meaning: A German football (soccer) stadium that has gotten so rowdy and intense that it resembles a loud, roiling mass of chaos.



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U.S. ARMY



# "FCK IST WIEDER DA!"

By Tamala Malerk

If you've ever done a double-take on the autobahn while driving near the KMC because you swore you saw a giant swear word graffitied on the cement, you have probably just seen the initials of the local popular football team: 1. Fußball-Club Kaiserslautern e. V., or FCK.

FCK has a history spanning over 126 years. Founded in 1900, FCK is one of the largest football clubs in Germany. Their nickname since the 1940s is the Red Devils and their opponents quake at the thought of having to face them in the "hellfire" of the stadium. Betzi the Red Devil became the official team mascot, mostly for their Kids' Club, on July 11, 2009.



The team won their first German football championship when they defeated the Munich team in 1951. Kaiserslautern-based players, led by Fritz Walter, earned Germany a World Cup Championship in 1954. Fritz Walter spent his entire career playing for FCK and today fans remember him fondly as they cheer “FCK ist wider da” (FCK is back) in the Fritz Walter Stadium. The stadium was originally called the Betzenberg, which is the name of the hill it is built on and the inspiration for the aforementioned mascot’s name.

After their World Cup win, FCK was a founding member of the German Bundesliga in 1963. The Bundesliga is the top-tier league of men’s football clubs in Germany with two levels. The top 18 teams make up 1. Bundesliga. The second-best 18 teams make up 2. Bundesliga, with the lower-performing teams falling into lower tiers outside of the Bundesliga.

FCK spent over 40 years in the 1. Bundesliga, winning two league titles in 1991 and 1998. They then spent the following 20 years bouncing between the first and second Bundesligas before being relegated to football’s third tier from 2018-2022. Since 2022, FCK has held steady in 2. Bundesliga. I was lucky enough to live in the area when the 2022 promotion took place and the celebration in the local air was palpable. FCK was back.

No matter where they stand in the leagues, fans are always in the stands cheering them on. I have found myself attempting to navigate downtown Kaiserslautern after a game, and the area is nothing but closed roads and waves of people in red and white walking around in droves to find their cars, trains, busses or an open bar to celebrate a win or mourn a loss. One local fan has collected over 300 FCK jerseys, including a white jersey that the team only wore once, which he displays in two locations: his home and his office.

FCK fans have even become known for their audience Choreografien (choreographies) at games: forming pictures, words and banners from items and papers held synchronously by audience members. Many of the best Choreografien come from FCK’s time in the third tier, according to local news agency SWR, proving that fans, even in the worst of times, will show up for FCK.

While 2. Bundesliga is the main team, the FCK brand is one where many different football players can take part. They have a girls’ league, a women’s league and different leagues for boys and men for those 21 and under.

Want to take in a Bundesliga game yourself? There are seven chances on Sundays in April and May 2026. Visit [www.der-be-tze-brennt.de/spiele/](http://www.der-be-tze-brennt.de/spiele/) for the full schedule. ■



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# FUßBALL

IS A WAY OF LIFE  
*in Germany*

By Kat Nickola



## IT'S FRIDAY GAME NIGHT

and the two primary routes into my neighborhood are closed to traffic and packed with busses carrying fans from outside of town. Lucky for me, I biked to work, though my route through the forest is full of people in red and white slowly, drunkenly shuffling up hill. I ding my bell, and they slump off to the side, making way for my commute home.







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**W**hen we rented our house in the Betzenberg neighborhood of Kaiserslautern, we did not fully grasp how much living near the local football stadium would affect our lives. We've grown accustomed to the pre-game road closures and post-game chaos with hordes of excited people who, thankfully, take the path of least resistance and stumble downhill into town. We can interpret the various cheering sounds and fireworks that waft over the neighborhood and can predict the hooliganism of visiting teams based on the number of paddy wagons and police in riot gear based at the nearby roundabout. It has been a (mostly) fun immersion into German football culture, surrounded by some of the country's fiercest fans.

You don't need to be stationed in Germany very long to know that Europe's number one sport will affect you in one way or another. Whether you've unknowingly boarded a train full of fans, run into traffic or not been able to find a decent hotel room on a game weekend, it's important to understand that in Germany, *Fußball* is a way of life. Fans are devoted, and if you are from a big college town or an NFL or NBA city in the States then you can grasp just how much life revolves around the sport for true fanatics.

## THE BUNDESLIGA

Germany's professional soccer league, the *Bundesliga*, is one of Europe's top leagues with teams and players receiving numerous international top honors. Germany's fans are known for their team commitment, too, attending matches in any weather.

Teams are operated by a football club, which must hold the majority voting rights according to the 50+1 rule. This means that the publicly owned clubs run by invested fans are the primary owners and private corporations or individuals cannot take over. This important German distinction keeps the clubs local, ticket costs low and garners a dedicated fan culture.

There are 18 teams in the top tier of the Bundesliga, representing cities across Germany. Interestingly, early regulations within the league limited an individual city to having only a single team in the top league; the rule was phased out, but its legacy means that the league has teams from geographically diverse areas, devout local fans and few local rivalries.

The Bundesliga season runs from August to May. Each team plays each other twice yearly: once at a home match and again at an away match. This means there are 34 games in a season. Teams earn 3 points for a win, 2 for a tie and 0 for losing; the team with the most points is declared the current champion. Running parallel to the Bundesliga season, teams also participate in the German Cup (DFB-Pokal) tournament, which is a single-elimination style series with semi-final matches held this year on April 21-22 and a final on May 23.

The top teams from both the Bundesliga and German Cup qualify to compete in the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) leagues during the next season. UEFA matches occur throughout the season but are typically on weeknights to not compete with local football. For the 2025-26 season, Germany is represented by Dortmund, Bayern, Leverkusen and Frankfurt in the Champions League and Freiburg and Stuttgart in the Europa League.

At the end of the season, the bottom two Bundesliga teams are relegated to the lower 2 Bundesliga tier, while the top two second-tier teams get to move up. A third spot is also up for grabs in a relegation play off that pits the 16th ranked team against the third-ranked team from 2 Bundesliga. A final professional tier, 3 Liga, has 20 teams with the potential for promotion.

It's important to know that football clubs affiliated with the Bundesliga don't only provide professional teams. Below the 3 Liga, the Regionalliga has semi-professional players from 90 teams competing in five regions. The German league system continues to offer lower and more local tiers for state and county leagues. Football clubs across the country have teams and academies for children, amateurs and semi-professionals in addition to the big well-known competitive pro teams. So, when the neighbor's kid tells you they play for the Bundesliga, they probably earned a spot in the U9 (Under 9s) on a competitive team whose players grow into amateurs that feed the pro team, so they have every right to brag. ■



## WHAT ABOUT THE FIFA WORLD CUP™?

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup is an international competition. Germany has now qualified for the World Cup 21 times with their inclusion in the 2026 series. Germany's Deutscher Fußball-Bund (DFB), which oversees the Bundesliga, assembles a national team from top players on German teams to participate. World Cup matches always occur in the summer, outside of the regular football season. In 2026, matches begin on June 11 and the final is held on July 19 in New York. Canada, Mexico and the USA are hosting the World Cup with matches held in 16 different cities.



## YOUR LOCAL TEAM

### SPANGDAHLEM

**FSV Salmrohr** is a tier 5 team who play in the Salmtal Stadium.

### USAG ANSBACH

Both the **Greuther Fürth** and **FC Nürnberg** are nearby 2 Bundesliga teams, but closer to home is the regional tier 4 **Ansbach** team.

### USAG BAVARIA

**FC Nürnberg** and **Greuther Fürth** are your nearest 2 Bundesliga teams.

### USAG RHEINLAND PFALZ & RAMSTEIN AIR BASE

**FC Kaiserslautern** is a 2 Bundesliga team playing in Fritz-Walter Stadium, also known as Betzenberg.

### USAG STUTTGART

**VfB Stuttgart** is a Bundesliga team playing at the MHP Arena, also known as the Neckarstadion.

### USAG WIESBADEN

**FSV Mainz 05** is your local Bundesliga team.



# CELEBRATE MATCH DAY

By Stacy Roman

**It's match day! All right, you've got your tickets in hand, and you've brushed up on your terminology and rules. Here are some things to know before you go.**

## THE BASICS

A few years back, comedian Jason Sudekis created a skit (and now popular TV show) about an American football coach hired to train an English Premier League (EPL) team. "Ted Lasso" hilariously bumbles his way through the lingo, rules and coaching. Here are a few basics to avoid becoming like Coach Lasso.

- **Common terminology:**

match = game

fixture = scheduled match

pitch = field

kit = uniform

promotion = moving up a league

relegation = moving down a league

VAR = video assistant referee

- Football matches are generally 90-minutes long, separated into two 45-minute halves. Depending on the amount of penalties and fouls during the half, the head referee will usually add a few minutes of make-up time at the end of each half.

- There are three referees—one center ref and two line judges on either side of the pitch. If a decision is challenged, or if the referee is unsure of the correct call, VAR is used. VAR is essentially the same as instant replay during NFL games.



## TICKETS TO PROFESSIONAL MATCHES

Scoring tickets to top-tier team matches is almost a science. Who is playing, location, venue, membership status, number of tickets needed and even plain geography can affect whether or not there are seats available. For example, we recently tried to buy tickets to Sheffield United vs. Leicester City. Because we weren't members of either club, and since the clubs are near each other, there was no general sales seat release. Here are some things to consider when buying tickets.

- **Are you a die-hard fan of a particular team?**

Consider purchasing an annual club membership. Members often have access to tickets before the general public. Just be warned that tickets are often sold individually, which means each person wanting tickets will need their own membership.

- **Buying multiple tickets doesn't mean you will sit with your party.**

My husband and son went to a Tottenham vs. FC Barcelona match and had seats two rows apart. Luckily, people volunteered to switch seats so they could sit together.

- **Hospitality packages can be worth it depending on the match and time of year.**

As the season progresses, team placement and seeding becomes more stable. Hospitality often includes decent seats in a dedicated section, pre- and/or post-game food and beverages.

- **Know your logistics before purchasing tickets.**

Some stadiums are on the outskirts of town and may not have public transportation readily available. Many fans tailgate at local pubs or bars ahead of time, so plan your time of arrival accordingly. Stadium size can have a direct impact on ticket availability. Huge venues such as Wembley Stadium, Camp Nou, and Allianz Arena may afford a better opportunity for tickets as opposed to smaller stadiums such as King Power Stadium and Volkswagen Arena.

- **Does the team matter?**

If you're catching a match for love of the game, considering popping down to one of the lower leagues. Local matches can be just as exciting for a lot less money. ■



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PHOTO BY  
**Katie Merry**



**The Temple of Apollo in Naxos, Greece**

The *Portata*, also known as the **Temple of Apollo in Naxos, Greece**, is a large, unfinished marble gate dedicated to the Greek god of music, poetry and prophecy: Apollo. Built in 530 B.C., it is located on the islet of Palatia and accessible by foot from the Naxos mainland. Photographer Katie Merry captured an incredible view of sunset shining through the precious landmark. It is said that the *Portata* faces Delos, Apollo’s birthplace, but it also has strong ties to Dionysus, as Naxos was his home. ■



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RAMSTEIN & VOGELWEH YOUTH PROGRAMS

2026

# EGG HUNT

Saturday 4 April

0915-1100

WOODLAWN GOLF COURSE ON RAMSTEIN AIR BASE

## START TIMES

EFMP: 0915

AGES 6-8: 1045

AGES 0-2: 1015

AGES 9-12: 1100

AGES 3-5: 1030

**NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED.**

**EGG HUNT WILL START PROMPTLY AT SCHEDULED TIMES.**

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