

# Heidelberg, Kitzingen rally for titles

BY RUSTY BRYAN

*Stars and Stripes*

HEIDELBERG, Germany — The Heidelberg Lady Generals and Kitzingen Rattlers came from behind Sunday to claim Army-Europe volleyball championships.

Heidelberg opened the best-of-five title match with its first loss of the four-day tournament before rallying to down Ansbach's Lady Cougars 14-25, 25-20, 25-16, 25-21. Kitzingen spotted Vicenza two games before wrapping up a 24-26, 25-27, 25-15, 25-23, 15-8 triumph.

## Women Heidelberg 3, Ansbach 1

"That took too long," said Heidelberg star Tiffany Collins after her team had shrugged of its first lost game of the tournament. "They shocked us that first game."

Ansbach used an assortment of deft dinks and gritty digs — most of them posted by Kim Ferguson and Pat Dyer — that seemed to turn Heidelberg's power game tentative.

Former West Point performer Stacy Gervelis, usually in full command at the net, posted just one kill in Game 1. Her front-line mate Collins and Fatma Lockett had none.

"We had a rough first game," said Heidelberg coach Len Palaschak, "but they really put it together after that. We started talking to each other and getting the ball up."

The result?

Sixteen more kills for Gervelis the rest of the way, five for Lockett and four for Collins. Gervelis also posted five blocks.

"Stacy really dominated the middle," Palaschak said.

Former Heidelberg High School star Kelly Quintal, who returned to Europe this year and stepped in as a setter for the Lady Generals, saw her team's slow start Sunday as part of a pattern.

"We're always like that," she said. "We don't really practice all that much — not every day like high school — and it takes a while to get into the groove."

Heidelberg's next chance to hit comes June 13-15 at the Patton Barracks gym here, where the Lady Generals will attempt to defend their U.S. Forces-Europe crown against USAFE's top two, Ramstein and Aviano, as well as old foe Ansbach.

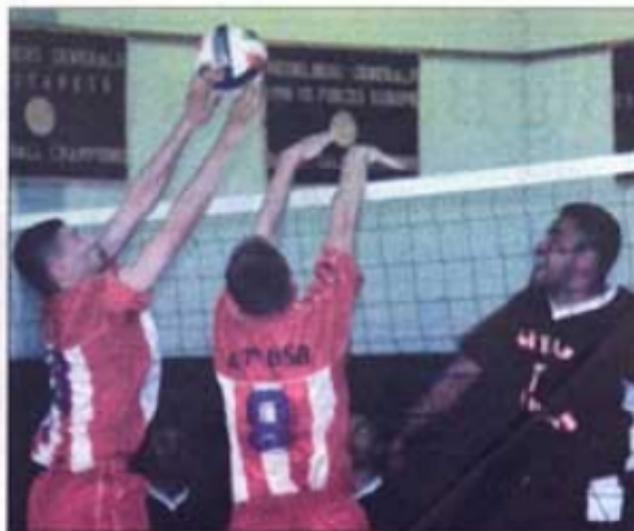
## Men Kitzingen 3, Vicenza 2

The Rattlers seem to be most comfortable coming out of a hole they've dug for themselves.

They started their tourney run by forfeiting their first two games on Thursday when no one could get off work to play, assuring themselves of the fourth seed for the finals.

Friday, they dropped the first game to Vicenza 25-27 before rallying for 25-17 and 15-8 victories. But Saturday they seemed to right themselves, sweeping defending champion Stuttgart in straight sets, only to drop the first two in Sunday's best-of-five final to Vicenza.

"We were just making little mistakes," said Kitzingen's Serapio Mejia, who posted 14 kills on the day. "I guess we adjusted in the last three games. We fixed what had to be fixed."



RUSTY BRYAN/Stars and Stripes

Vicenza's Uso Valai hammers a kill try through Kitzingen's Serapio Mejia, left, and Joshua Anderson during the final of the Army-Europe volleyball championships.

The repairs led to a confidence-building 25-15 victory in Game 3 and a clutch 25-23 triumph in Game 4 to tie the match.

Kitzingen, getting power from Kai Cox and Mejia and defense from Kimo Hollingrake took an 8-3 lead in the final game and never looked back.

Next up for the Rattlers are another shot at Vicenza and the Air Force duo of Aviano and Ramstein in the final four.

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