

## Karch Kiraly: Golden oldie

**At 45, AVP veteran Kiraly shows no signs of slowing down as he and partner Larry Witt prepare for this weekend's Huntington Beach Open.**



SHAWN PRICE  
Register columnist  
ON THE WATER  
[sprice@ocregister.com](mailto:sprice@ocregister.com)

Huntington beach pier Reports of his career demise have been greatly exaggerated.

After just a few minutes of watching beach volleyball legend Karch Kiraly go through his rigorous workout, you're convinced: Yes, he *can* play forever.

Trainer Mike Rangel is putting Kiraly, 45, and new partner, Larry Witt, through their paces in preparation for this weekend's AVP Huntington Beach Open. They played against each other in the final here last year. Stretching, jumping, medicine ball, digging, spiking, setting, blocking. It seems exhilarating and exhausting at the same time.

"Other than Lance Armstrong, nobody could keep up with him," Rangel said of Kiraly. As the leg and footwork drills move to game situations and defensive drills, Rangel, who has trained Kiraly for almost five years, made it clear that he is not his coach. His only role is to keep the king of the beach physically sharp. It's a routine Kiraly keeps up year round.

"I love it. My body craves it," Kiraly said. "I'm afraid if I stopped for a month it would be too hard to get back. So it's easy to maintain."

The gray lightly sprinkled in his dark blond hair is the small reminder that Kiraly is human. However, much he has defied time, the question dangles over him every season, practically every game now. How long will he patrol these sands?

"I'm interested in finding that out myself," Kiraly said. "I keep surprising myself, and this workout has certainly pushed back that question. I don't think I could do this if I didn't love it so much. I couldn't stand the intensity level."

If his Tarzan-like physique holds up, he thinks it might only be an ebb in passion that points him to the exit. Though today that seems unlikely, too.

"The young guys help rejuvenate me. Larry's working hard, and he's really improved his block. That hunger I love to see. The disadvantage is my partners are saddled with grandpa. I'm not the player I was," Kiraly said, laughing.



Karch Kiraly won the first of his three NCAA titles with UCLA in 1979, the year partner Larry Witt was born. 'The young guys help rejuvenate me,' Kiraly said. 'Larry's working hard, and he's really improved his block.'

BRUCE CHAMBERS, THE  
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It's an assessment few others share. He still has the ability and enthusiasm of players half his age. And Witt is nearly that. Kiraly won the first of his three NCAA championships with UCLA in 1979, the year Witt was born.

"The first few practices, you're in awe a little," Witt said. "First and foremost you team up because you think you can do well, but he's the best there is. He's going to make you better."

Witt, a rising star before teaming with Kiraly, has gone from 14th in blocking to second this season.

Although a knee injury forced Kiraly out of one event and last weekend's early elimination from Santa Barbara was a disappointment, both players like their chances this season.

"I've never felt more sure of myself," Witt said. "Don't expect too much right away, but it'll come. It could take one more tournament."

Said Kiraly: "I'm just enjoying playing with Larry. You can't just say a placing. It depends on a lot of circumstances. If we play well and get beat by better teams, I'm happy with that."

\$245,000 AVP Huntington  
Beach Open

**What:** Pro Beach Volleyball Tournament featuring Mike Lambert and Stein Metzger, Phil Dalhausser and Todd Rogers, Casey Jennings and Matt Fuerbringer. And fresh from their historic 50th tournament victory as a team, Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh, along with Elaine Youngs and Rachel Wacholder and Annett Davis and Jenny Johnson Jordan.

**Where:** Huntington Beach Pier

**When:** Friday: 8 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Admission: free. Saturday:  
8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. General  
admission free, \$35 for  
courtside seating. Sunday: 8:30  
a.m.- 5:30 p.m. General  
admission free, \$35 for  
courtside seating.

**Information:** [www.avp.com/](http://www.avp.com/)

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CONTACT US: (714) 796-2329 or [sprice@ocregister.com](mailto:sprice@ocregister.com)