

EDITED BY SHAWN DONNELLY

BIG TIME

#29

LOOK GOOD>>PLAY HARD>>LIVE LARGE>>LOOK GOOD>>PLAY HARD

>> MR. SANDMAN >>

TIGER. MAGIC. KARCH. RARE MONIKERS NOTWITHSTANDING, you usually have to do something pretty special to get into the first-name-only club. Karch Kiraly took care of that years ago. The only volleyball player to win Olympic gold on both hardwood (1984, 1988) and sand (1996), he is considered the sport's all-time greatest player. And at 45, Kiraly still isn't ready to throw in the beach towel. This year on the AVP Tour, he's partnered with 26-year-old Larry Witt — who was born six weeks after Kiraly's first professional beach volleyball tournament win in 1979. Hey, Karch on.

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Q How'd you get the name Karch?

A My real name is Charles, and since birth my parents have always called me *Karch* or *Karchy*, which is like *Chuck* or *Chucky* in Hungarian.

Q Will this be your last year on the AVP?

A Well, each of the last 10 years has been my last year. And then my partner and I do well, and I have a good time and decide to play again. I'm going to try to win tournaments again this year and see how it goes. If I do well and have fun, maybe I'll play beyond that.

Q How are you feeling?

A Feeling great — working out really hard. I feel healthy and strong.

Q What do you do for training?

A Well, one of my favorite things to do is work with my conditioning

coach, Mike Rangel, who is a plyometrics expert [see sidebar]. We do tons of plyometrics and conditioning drills, jump-training drills, and we do it all in the soft sand. That's probably the most important part of my training and the part I crave.

Q How often do you do it?

A Twice a week almost every week of the year. So even when the season ends, I probably take only five or six days off, and then I start getting ready for the next year. I feel that at this age I can't take a long time off and expect to get it back, so I just work out year-round.

Q How long are the sessions?

A They're about 45 minutes of hell, and they're great. I love them. It's really hard — it's the hardest training I've probably ever done — and yet it's

much easier on my joints because I'm doing it in the sand. So even though I get really tired doing it, I'm not particularly sore afterward. My back doesn't ache; my knees don't ache. If I were doing the same thing on the hardwood floor, I would ache a lot, with my age and the mileage that I've logged.

Q Do you spend much time in the gym?

A Yeah, I lift two or three times a week. I can't lift nearly as heavy as I used to, just because I've done so many millions of jumps and swings. I've had three shoulder surgeries, so the lifting I do is not particularly big powerlifting or anything. It's just to try to keep myself as strong as possible, minimize injury if it occurs and help avoid injury.