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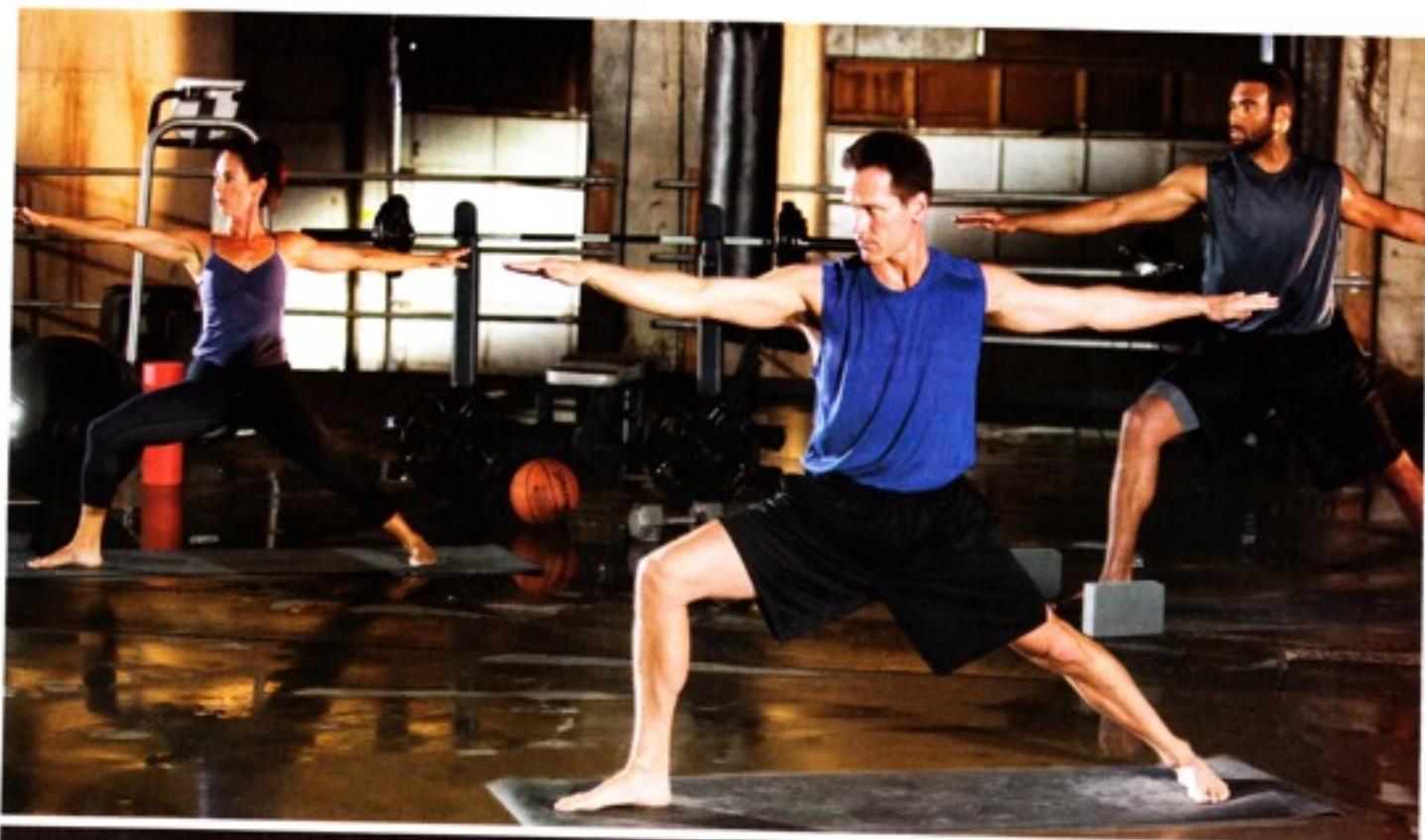
LOS ANGELES SPORTS AND
FITNESS MAGAZINE
SUMMER 2010

SUMMER ENERGY ISSUE

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ENDURANCE TO THE EXTREME





commitment to the court

yoga teacher kent katich shares practice secrets with NBA stars by tiffany chin

CHALLENGE A COMPETITIVE ATHLETE with something that they can't do, and they are not able to resist. Kent Katich was playing basketball professionally in Sweden when he noticed a teammate practicing headstands. This sparked his interest, as he said, "It was something I couldn't do." Katich asked the teammate exactly what he was doing, and we may not be surprised to hear that the answer was Yoga. Competitive by nature, Katich was spurred by the challenge and became determined to learn more about Yoga in order to excel in it.

"If you take care of your body, you stand a better chance at living a more quality life." —Kent Katich

Katich takes these words to heart as an athlete of forty years, vegetarian since the age of nineteen, and most notably, Yoga instructor to twenty-five percent of the NBA basketball players, including members of LA's beloved Lakers.

Beginning as a basketball player himself, Katich achieved All-State merit in high school and earned a scholarship to play at the University of South Dakota.

Two years later, he left early to join a Native American National team, which led to an offer to play professionally in Sweden, where the aforementioned discovery of Yoga took place.

When Katich returned to the states, he began exploring Yoga practice and tried different styles with multiple teachers across the country. Eventually, he discovered a Hatha Yoga class that resonated with

him, and a room full of people he could relate to. From there, Katich began to practice rigorously for two to three hours each day. This eclectic background has supported his view that an individual's practice does not have to be limited by a certain school of Yoga; it can be adapted to meet one's own unique physical and mental needs.

While avidly practicing Yoga, Katich joined some friends (who happened to be professional NBA players) in a pick-up game. Even though he hadn't dribbled a ball in about a year, he was astounded by his own endurance and physical fitness, and the fact he was able to keep up with the pros. At that point Katich made the connection between Yoga, fitness and basketball and realized how potentially beneficial it could be for professional athletes who desire to be in their best possible shape.

Gradually he began inspiring players to take up Yoga practice and then moved to California to settle into a studio, first in Brentwood where he taught for four years, then to Westwood Village where he has taught for the past eleven years. Katich has trained and continues to coach athletes from UCLA, NBA players including Jordan Farmar, NBA coaches, major league baseball players, football players, golfers, sports agents, celebrities, doctors, lawyers and bankers.

A lifetime of athletics has primed both Katich's body and his teaching methodology. He tailors the practice to specific athletes, including making adjustments for players at different stages of their careers and who specialize in different types of games. For example, Katich

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says, "Basketball players typically have tight hamstrings and hip flexors, as well as bad backs from running and jumping all day long."

In addition to integrating players' needs into the practice, Katich tailors his teaching to the language and needs of athletes and he literally goes the distance to create an athletic comfort zone with custom Yoga mats printed with court and field designs that relate back to the game. He'll refer to them in the practice, giving instructions such as, "Place your hand on the free throw lines."

Katich does more than simply instruct the mechanics of the practice. He emphasizes the importance of "moving through judgment, error or even self-congratulations." Since "one play or game does not guarantee success in the next." It's a lesson that is at the forefront of his mind since he coaches players from rival teams. While watching the recent NBA playoffs, Katich's peak moments had nothing to do with the numbers on the scoreboard, but the ebb and flow of the game and the players' personal successes and failures. Most importantly, he feels, "It's gratifying to witness their commitment to the process even when it fails."

LAYOGA

Kent Katich teaches All Sport Yoga at the Yoga Court in Westwood, Los Angeles. His line of DVDs, from Yoga Hoops to Yoga Gold, Football, Basketball and Soccer are designed to appeal to men who may be initially tentative about beginning Yoga. For more information, visit: yogahoops.com.

Tiffany Chin is writer and photographer who is a recent graduate of Pepperdine University whose own scholastic training includes time on the basketball court and the Yoga mat: mail.tiffany@mac.com.



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from the mat to the court

Brian Zoubek

Zoubek is a twenty-two-year-old center who recently graduated from Duke and is preparing to enter the NBA draft. Towering at one inch over seven feet tall, Zoubek has noticed an overall improvement in his core strength, flexibility and balance since practicing Yoga and enjoys the mental clarity it brings.

Yoga's Benefits:

"It's nice to have a workout that doesn't put so much pressure on the body, like pounding on the feet and beating up the body."

"Yoga has boosted my confidence as an athlete because I have gained more awareness of my body."

Kevin Love

Love is a six foot, ten inch player on the Minnesota Timberwolves roster has been working with Katich since last summer. He attended UCLA where he learned about Katich's work with professional "big-time" athletes, which piqued his curiosity. Love hopes to play ten to fifteen more years in the NBA so he feels that Yoga can help him maintain his body and increase longevity in order to withstand 82-game seasons.

Yoga's Benefits:

"Yoga can help maintain longevity in the game and helps with muscles, flexibility, and injury prevention."

YOGA AND AYURVEDA WITH FELICIA M. TOMASKO, RN



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