

## Slow and Mellow: Manhattan Beach Open:

Written by Dave Howard

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With the AVP a no-show at the Manhattan Beach Open, there were a ton of questions on the courts.

Who's playing? Who is that?

What are the new rules? What is it a net rule?

Is someone winning? What's the score?

[Pro Beach Volleyball at Manhattan Beach Open- Gretchen and Carol](#) - [The best video clips are right here](#)

In the wake of the AVP shutting its doors, the Manhattan Beach Open was quickly thrown together. Bud Light brought their nets and a guy with a loud speaker barked out the court assignments. Arranged by the city, they chose to use an older rules format which meant the games couldn't not count towards Olympic qualification.

This cheapened the event for many of the AVP players (Kerri Walsh (who let her husband Casey Jennings play) , Rachel Wacholder Scott, Elaine Youngs, and even the always mighty Lindquist sisters), so none of them showed up. There were a few AVP players like Priscilla Lima who gave it a shot. with retiring AVPer Angie Lewis. But with no Olympic points and only \$4k in prize money, the only reason to attend would have been a matter of pride. The winner of the tourney gets a permanent plaque on their pier. So some bragging rights involved

The weird part was not recognizing any of the players and not knowing any rankings. The AVP's big board had been replaced by a couple of sheets of butcher paper. Except in a few cases, the suits didn't bare the name or even the initials of the players suits. There were no placards telling you who was playing and what the score was, you just had to kind of guess. I doubt the players new the score most of the time. It was really hard to determine who's who. One pair Gretchen Duffner and Carol Hamilton did have a plan to combat this. Often in their matches they would make sure to bark out a "Good one Carol Hamilton" to the small collection of photogs on the beach. Wachtfogel and Rosenthal took it on the men's side. Heather Lowe and Tealle Hunkus beat Chicagoans Kathryn Babcock and Erin Gray for the title. Surprising because I saw Babcock/Gray earlier against the Machado sisters and I wasn't that impressed. Shows you what I know.

But yes, it was old school. You could get right on the line for the games. Some of the more marquee men's teams got pretty decent crowds. There was a great spirit to the tourney which I thought was going to feel more like a wake. But yes, the balls going at top speeds and the rivalries between the players was sorely missed. Due to the lacking crowds, parking was easy and beers came quick at the Shellback.

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So I guess a LITTLE old school is not such a bad thing.

Videos on my [You Tube Channel](#) . More to come.



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