



**Deborah Wall**  
OUTDOORS

## Hit the trail to escape city environs

**W**hen you just want to get some miles under your belt and some city cobwebs out of your head, the Bristlecone Trail is good medicine — particularly in crisp fall weather after the quaking aspen leaves have turned to gold. Even in summer it offers a chance to enjoy a forest and possibly see some wildlife and can be done either as a 6-mile loop or an out-and-back of whatever distance you choose to make it. The latter is particularly useful for families with small children.

The trail starts in Lee Canyon, in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. Assuming you're going there from Las Vegas, keep three facts in mind that are all consequences of the trail's high elevation of 8,650 to 9,400 feet: temperatures will be about 20 degrees lower, you'll be more prone to sunburn, and the hiking will feel more strenuous.

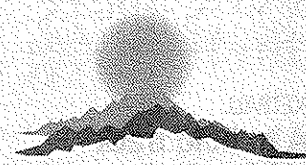
There are two trailheads — upper and lower bristlecone — and the mile of paved road between them is part of the complete loop.

Most loop hikers park at the lower trailhead and start by walking the road to the upper one. That gets the uphill part out of the way before they get tired. It also brings them past the Las Vegas Ski & Snowboard Resort early in the day, when they have a better chance to see wild horses on its grassy slopes.

From the upper trailhead, the well-defined path heads up the ridgeline to the north

► SEE **OUTDOORS** PAGE 17AA

# Sports



INSIDE

**Tae kwon do league  
gets under way**

PAGE 14AA

SEPTEMBER 28, 2005

**BOB KELLY**

## A classic event

*Fall tourney evolves  
into a pinnacle of girls  
volleyball competition*

By **KEVIN STOTT**

VIEW STAFF WRITER

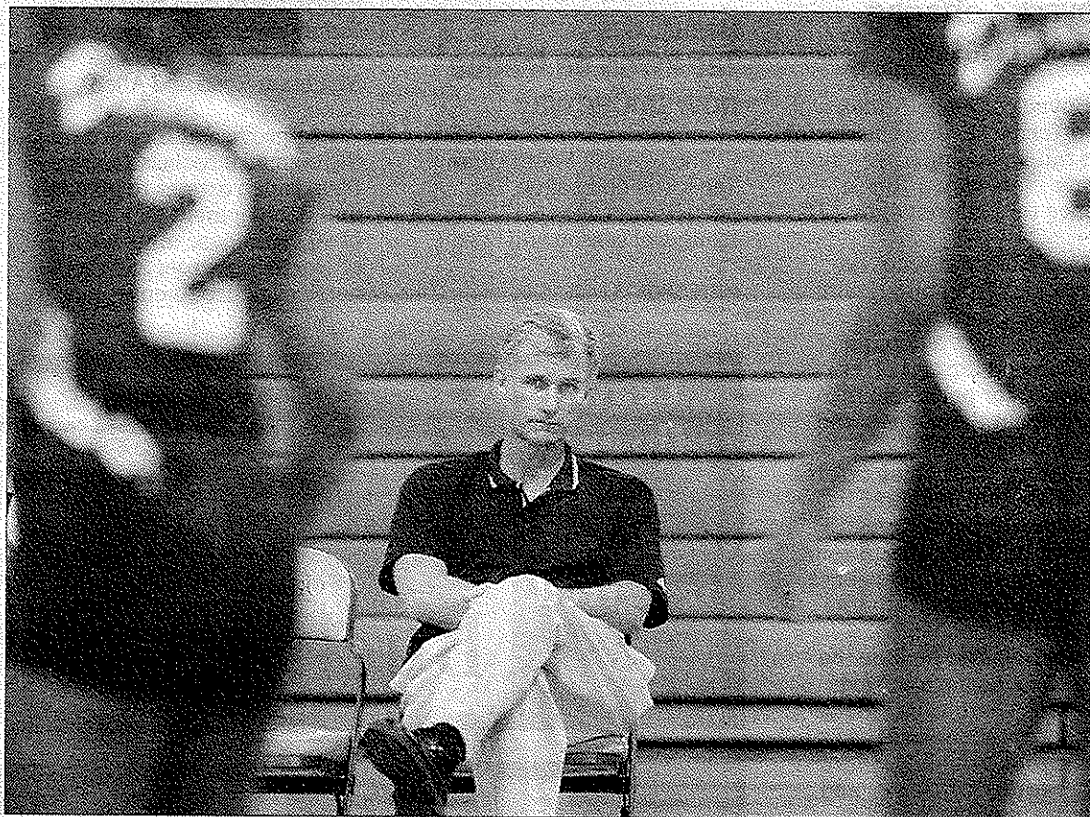
When coach Bob Kelly started the Durango High School Fall Classic Tournament 11 years ago, he had no idea it would blossom into one of the most prestigious high school girls volleyball tournaments in the country.

This year's tournament, which was held Sept. 16-17 at Durango and Green Valley high schools, featured 10 of the top 100 girls teams ranked by PrepVolleyball.com in its Sept. 8 rankings, and four of the top seven teams from around the nation, including No. 1-ranked Assumption from Louisville, Ky., No. 2 Mira Costa from Manhattan Beach, Calif. — the defending champs from last year's tournament — No. 6 Los Alamitos from Los Alamitos, Calif., and No. 7 Berkeley Prep from Tampa, Fla.

And Assumption proved that No. 1 ranking wasn't just hype as it defeated Mira Costa in the championship match in a 33-31, 22-25, 15-11 three-game thriller at Durango on Sept. 17.

Kelly, 52, who has been coaching volleyball in Las Vegas for 26 years, explained how the tournament began.

"When I was at Clark (High School), I had a Labor Day tournament ... in the early '80s, and it drew some teams," he said. "It drew Mira Costa and South Torrance and a team from Northern California called Los Altos, and it was a pretty competitive tournament. And there were two



SHELLY DONAHUE/VIEW

Durango High School girls volleyball coach Bob Kelly watches a match between Durango and Coronado on Sept. 7. Kelly, who boasts a combined 11 boys and girls state titles in Nevada, just wrapped up the 11th year of his Durango Fall Classic in which the top two ranked teams in the nation by PrepVolleyball.com — Assumption, Ky. and Mira Costa, Calif. — played in the championship on Sept. 17 match at Durango.

California high schools, Aviation and Mira Costa.

"Then one year — I think it was around '82 or so — Aviation closed down and joined forces with Mira Costa and that was the year they came to my little Clark High School tournament and they were the No. 1 team in the country. They taught us a lot. And (Mira Costa coach) Dae Lea Aldrich and her team came once I decided to expand it, and her team is one of the few teams that has been here ever since."

Kelly said the tournament

tradition followed him when he went to Durango in 1993 to open the new high school.

"When I left Clark for one year, then I kind of dropped that tournament. And then I came to Durango and I think it was the second year I was here and there was the baseball strike and there was no World Series. That's why I called it the Fall Classic, because I decided to have a Fall Classic. And it started off with eight teams and it worked out well, and I thought, let me see what I can do to expand it."

PrepVolleyball.com's John Tawa called the tournament "the best the nation has to offer," and now it is regarded by many as the second-biggest such tourney in the country behind the Nike Challenge, which will be played Friday and Saturday at Mother McAuley High School in Chicago.

Kelly, a native of Santa Cruz, Calif., and the father of two boys, Christopher and Danny, ended up in Nevada when California wouldn't do.

► SEE **COACH** PAGE 18AA

## ▶ **OUTDOORS:** Some bristlecones are 5,000 years old

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17AA

up and you see the west side of Mummy Mountain. Continuing, you'll reach an exposed point where you will be able to see down into Lee Canyon and far-reaching views of the Sheep Mountains, part of the Desert National Wildlife Range.

Conifers are sparse on these rocky slopes, but it's here you'll find tough, windblown bristlecones pines. The oldest trees alive are bristlecones and some on this very trail are pushing their 5,000th birthdays. Increasing in girth less than 1/100th of an inch a year, a 5-foot bristlecone might be 2,000 years old.

The trail heads west and narrows as it reaches its highest elevation, about 9,400 feet, and then heads around a rocky slope descending down into Scout Canyon Road. Graveled but now abandoned, it serves as a trail for the rest of the hike.

About half way through the hike you'll reach a saddle and the sign indicating the Bonanza Trailhead. This little known trail is a haven for backpackers looking for solitude in the nearby Mount Charleston Wilderness Area.

Continuing down the road you'll find excellent views of the ski slopes; above them, evidence of past avalanches. Not long after that, you'll pass a large grove of aspens — one last sweet sight before the road levels out and offers an easy descent into the lower trailhead parking area.

Deborah Wall is the author of "Great Hikes, A Cerca Country Guide," published by Stephens Press. She can be reached at Deborah@hikingthewest.com/

## ▶ **COACH:** Kelly's name seen as synonymous with Nevada volleyball

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13AA

"I wanted to teach in the Santa Cruz area but it was really difficult to find a job at that time," he said.

The University of California, Santa Barbara graduate became involved with the sport while in college.

"When I was in junior college (at Cabrillo Junior College in Watsonville, Calif.) there was a coach there named Jane Ward who was a setter for the '64 and '68 Olympic teams, and that's when I first got introduced to volleyball," he said. "And the sand game was in its infancy — not really its infancy but it was still kind of new, so I started doing that. Then, my first year (in Las Vegas), I met with a guy named Chuck Erbe, the (University of Southern California) coach who also recently coached at Michigan State, and he was a big influence on me.

"When I got here, there was an opening at Clark, so I said, 'Oh, why not?' I thought I'd try it. Meeting Chuck Erbe that first year really kind of fashioned my coaching right there. He was a huge influence on me because he was a highly successful and controversial coach in his day. He was kind of a maverick."

Eleven state titles in boys and girls volleyball and 11 Durango Fall Classics later, Kelly's name has become synonymous with the sport in Southern Nevada.

"He's always been a name in volleyball wherever he's coached," Palo Verde High School coach Amy Rogers said.

Coach Sue Thurman of Las Vegas High School, whose

Wildcats played in this year's tournament along with Kelly's Durango squad, Green Valley, Bishop Gorman and the defending state champs Galena, strongly agreed.

"Bob is one of those coaches that's been around for a long time that when you talk about volleyball, you can't go to a volleyball tournament in the city or you can't go to a volleyball tournament somewhere and not hear his name somehow involved in the conversation," Thurman said. "I personally have a lot of respect for him. He's always been extremely helpful in helping any of the younger coaches kind of get under way with any questions or anything that anybody might have.

"And I think the level of the tournaments that he hosts also adds to the growth of volleyball in the city. You know, we take our top teams and we put them in that tournament and we battle for the last eight spots. And it's great for the kids in the city to see volleyball at that level because the level of volleyball in Nevada is really where the level of volleyball is everywhere else."

Kelly said his tourney has helped Las Vegas become volleyball central in the West. He said he once read an item in a program that showed him how big the tournament had become.

"I think it's huge because it's been a great meeting place for top schools," he said. "It's interesting because I've read

**"I think it's huge because it's been a great meeting place for top schools."**

**BOB KELLY**  
FOUNDER, DURANGO HIGH SCHOOL FALL CLASSIC TOURNAMENT

programs, like Archbishop Mitty (High School in San Jose, Calif.) For example, they used to come out here and they won the tournament a couple times. I was reading a player profile about a girl that went to Santa Clara (from Archbishop Mitty) and she was asked what one of her best volleyball memories was, and she said, 'Winning the Durango Classic.'

Besides helping make Las Vegas known for girls prep volleyball, Kelly has helped put Durango on the map.

"At one time when we'd travel — you know

we would wear Durango (jerseys) — and everyone would ask, 'Are you from Colorado?' But not anymore, because of this tournament," he said.

On top of coaching the Durango girls team and organizing the tournament every year, Kelly coaches the Nevada Juniors Volleyball Club, organized in 1984 by UNLV head coach Karen Lamb along with Nike Davis Volleyball Festival co-founders Dave and Bernice Epperson.

Through its history, more than 40 of the club's players have received Division I athletic scholarships, with the team winning three Nike Davis Festival championships and two United States Junior Olympic championships.

"It's not really a big club, but we have a highly competitive club with a certain philosophy and it's hard to find players and coaches that have our philosophy, so we generally

keep it small," Kelly said. "Our goal is to compete nationally, to play the best teams in the country and to succeed. And we have won national championships before."

Kelly revealed how important club play is to the elite athlete who wants to continue with the sport in college.


"The club is the total concept," he said. "I would really have to rack my brains to recall in the last 10 years or so a female volleyball player getting a Division I full scholarship who never played club. It doesn't really happen. And it's simply because that it's in the club that the girls get recruited."

The list of talented players Kelly has coached through the years at the school and the club goes on. Irene Renteira, Charlene Johnson, Amy Schlauder, Natalie Smart, Kelsey Johnson, Heather Bravo, Jessie Acuna — now an assistant coach for Kelly — Jennifer Todd and Michele Fellows are among quality players who learned the ropes from Kelly, then took what they learned to the next level.


Maybe the biggest compliment to Kelly's legacy as the architect of the Fall Classic came in a quote he relayed from Aldrich, the coach of last year's championship bracket winner Mira Costa, the second-ranked team in the nation heading into this year's Durango Fall Classic.

"To win this tournament is huge," Kelly said. "Like Dae Lea Aldrich said prior to winning last year, 'I've won a couple of national championships and I've won every major tournament except one, the Durango Fall Classic. And I'm not going to retire until I win it.'"

**Service Directory**  
FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION CALL 383-0388



**Bob Morris**  
GARDENING  
Every Wednesday in your neighborhood View.



**VIEW**  
NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPERS  
FOR INFORMATION ON ADVERTISING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE NEXT EDITION CALL YOUR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, OR  
**383-0388**

**Priority Pet Sitting**  
**Free Consultation!**  
Call For Reservations 458-0700  
Your pet is well cared for by a professional **Registered Veterinary Technician** in the comfort of his/her own home.  
• Dog Walking • Medications • Personalized Care  
**SPECIAL DISCOUNTS FOR NEW CLIENTS**  
**Jennifer Robertson, R.V.T.** [www.prioritypetsitting.com](http://www.prioritypetsitting.com)  
Owner • Bonded and Insured