

Meet Hirokazu Kanazawa, a deadly master of an ancient art

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IT would take a brave man to try to pick a fight with 81-year-old Hirokazu Kanazawa.

Despite the comb-over hairstyle and wrinkles, Mr Kanazawa is one of the rare holders of the 10th dan black belt - the highest honour in karate - and would easily hold his own if things turned ugly.

"If somebody was attacking me, it would be an automatic reaction. I've been doing this (karate) for 64 years," a smiling Mr Kanazawa said.

"I started out because I liked the fighting but after three years of training I started to understand it helped with character building. I still do something physical every day."

Mr Kanazawa looked in remarkable shape yesterday as he performed a series of moves to help promote this weekend's Shokotan Karate-do International Federation World Championships.

More than 750 competitors from nearly 50 countries will take part in the three-day event at Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre.

It will be the very last time Japanese-based Mr Kanazawa presides over the event as chairman or "Kanchō".

Australian team captain Brandt Cogill, 30, said it was an honour to have Mr Kanazawa attending the world championships.

"I actually hope when I get to 81 years of age that I can be half the man he is," Mr Cogill said.



Karate Master Hirokazu Kanazawa, 81, with his son Nobuaki / Pic: Cameron Richardson