



Orindawoods Tennis News

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Orindawoods Tennis Club: 925-254-1065; www.orindawoodstennis.com

"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it" – Celia, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene IV

2019 Season

Monday Team Tennis

Monday Team Tennis season is off to a great start! We have four teams and over 55 participants this summer.

We will play for 16 weeks. Standings after 9 weeks (through July 8th):

Team	W	L	PCT	GB
John / Becky	379	341	.526	0
M'Liss / Marilyn	377	343	.524	2
Chris / Rich	345	375	.479	34
Cindy / Denis	339	381	.471	40

As you can see, the teams are quite close this year. The standings are updated each week on the website, and in the glass display case on the club deck. Good luck to all! Monday Team Tennis, so much fun!

Summer Schedule

Twilight Tennis BBQs

We had a great first Twilight in June (6/30), and we are looking forward to several more this summer. Join us for some fun mix and match tennis, a great dinner, and some excellent company. The cost is only \$20 / person. Let us know if you are playing tennis (non players are welcomed), and if you want steak or chicken. Bring your own beverage, and we'll take care of the rest! The dates for this summer's tennis socials are:

July 21st	Sunday	Tennis 5-7pm	Dinner 7:15pm
August 11th	Sunday	Tennis 5-7pm	Dinner 7:15pm
September 15th	Sunday	Tennis 4-6pm	Dinner 6:15pm
October 13th	Sunday	Tennis 4-6pm	Dinner 6:15pm

To register, contact Keith (keith@orindawoodstennis.com).

I'm looking forward to a great summer of much tennis fun! Join us!

Tennis Tip:

Footwork, The Split Step

"More isn't better, better is better"

12 steps vs 4: We're all enrolled in a twelve-step program. Maybe you didn't realize that, but it's true. We're all attempting to overcome our addiction to not moving. Or as one student calls it, "My inner sloth."

Between when you hit a ball, and the ball comes back to you from your opponent's side, the average player takes 4 steps. A strong, amateur player (4.5/5.0) takes about 8 steps, and a professional player takes about 12 steps. What are all these "extra" steps? When do they happen?

Well, there is contact, and you take a recovery step (1 step), then you slide into position, based on where your shot goes (4 steps). When the opponent hits, you take a split step (2 steps) and move to the ball (3 steps or so), and then adjust to the ball to hit properly (2 steps). That's plus or minus a few steps, here and there, but that is basically how it's done (12).

The club player hits the ball and stands there admiring their shot, then sees where the ball is returned to, and runs over to the ball, stops and hits (4 steps). And then just watches from there, never getting back into position or getting ready to respond. "I mean, why move? They might miss and I would get a bunch of useless exercise."

Pool Scene

The Orindawoods Tennis Club pool open through October. We're not big on rules, but safety first is the biggest.

Pool Rules

- Hours: dawn to dusk, spa until 9 pm.
- Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult
- No Lifeguard (best to have a swim buddy and not swim alone)
- No running
- No diving
- No glass in the pool area
- No pets in the pool area (sorry Rover)
- The gas BBQ is for Club Events only, but there is a charcoal BBQ for your use. Bring your own charcoal.
- Guest kids are \$1, adults \$5
- In order to preserve staff sanity, the game of Marco Polo is forbidden. ☺

Weekly Lessons

Hit and Fit:

TRX workout (strength and stretching) & tennis drills using the Playmate ball machine.

Friday 10:30-12 noon	\$20
Saturday 7:30-9 a.m.	\$20

Tuesday Ladies' Clinic:

Tuesdays at 9:30 \$5

Thursday Men's Clinic:

Thursdays at 9:30 \$5

The men's and women's clinics are drop-in. **Register** for Hit and Fit by e-mailing Keith you are attending.

Court Washing

First and fourth Fridays of the month. 12-3 p.m. Check the court scheduler for which courts are available for play.

Quote of the Month:

"Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows that it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows that it must out run the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle: when the sun comes up, you had better be running."

Movement is a balance between lazy, efficiency (just right) and hyper activity (over done). **More isn't better, better is better.** If we look at these 12 steps, and their groupings, each move has an important purpose, and a skill to learn to carry them out. Let's start with the split step, when your opponent is in the process of hitting the ball. You jump up in the air, and land on your toes, ready to move.

What's so hard about that? Well, timing. When do you jump? When do you land? How do you land? And why am I even doing this?

Timing the split / be air borne: As illustrated above (club players: only 4 steps), most players don't even split step, or not very often, and not very well. When we watch videos of elite players, like Rafa or The Fed, we see them jump into the air (both feet off the ground) and balanced, and as they start to come back down, they have clearly know which way the ball is going, for they already start to turn in midair. They don't land with both feet facing forward in the neutral position, but already rotated to take off to the left, right, forward or backward. This means, that they are in the air at the **moment of recognition**, and land lightly and bounce (more on this below) into the next step. The moment of recognition of when you know which way the ball is traveling. This moment is normally AFTER the opponent hits the ball, so begin the split step when the opponent is hitting, so that they are in the air when they can tell the direction the ball is going. Recognition is first possible when the ball has traveled about 4-6 feet off the opponent's racquet. Sometimes we can anticipate sooner, but anticipation means a concrete clue and not just a guess or hunch.

Bounce / spring: Our bodies are made up of bones, muscles, fat and fascia. Fascia is the connective tissue, and often acts as springs in our bodies. I don't want muscles to push off, I want to bounce in the right direction, by landing and springing back up. Muscle movement is slow, compared to rebounding in the right direction.

Moving Quickly: How the fascia works is apparent in observing very fast animals, like deer, antelope, kangaroo. They don't run using muscles, they bounce or glide along. If you look at their legs, they are very thin, and have very little muscle at all, but they can go incredibly fast. We need muscles to get started, and then from there, we want to bounce or spring along through the rest of the point. The fascia (springs) stretch and then bounce back, propelling us. If we stop, we must use muscles once again to get started all over again. A very slow move. When we watch elite players, they never stop moving while the point is in play.

A body in motion tends to stay in motion, and a body at rest tends to stay at rest. That's the law of inertia (Physics is life). It's less work to keep moving than to stop and start again. But more work than standing around daydreaming.

The challenges: You should be in the air when they hit, which is hard to time, and even harder to commit to doing. It means you must move on every exchange, and not wait to see if the ball is even going to you. Playing this way is a lot more exercise. You will get exercise. You will get tired. You're going to break a sweat. And you will play better. That's the HUGE upside. Start moving!

There is a story of a high school coach talking to his team on the first day of practice. In his opening remarks, he asked his players. "Anyone here not up for moving?" Some players shifted uneasily. He pointed to a distant, lush green, well-manicured hillside, and said, "That is where golf practice is. That's the team for the people that don't want to move."

Movement, the whole point. But hey, the goal is not to move all the time, that's silly. It's hyper activity. The goal is to move all the time.... Huh?

Move appropriately. We always look for shortcuts in life, and they don't really work. The point isn't to move, the point is to play tennis. To move in a way that helps you play tennis. Don't just move, play tennis. All the moves, all the steps are not the same. You are not just bouncing from one foot to the other, or bouncing up in down. There are different phases, different moves, different dance steps. They are:

Preparation, position, pause, pursue.

Preparation: arms up out in front rolls, lifts you up onto your toes. Some players when waiting just move their feet. This is the closest to "just move your feet", and it

reminds them to stay active. But this bouncing is just a reminder, before play commences, that tennis is a game of movement. Bouncing around before isn't necessary, but if bouncing around helps you remember to move, while you wait for the serve or return, fair enough.



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Position, based on where you hit the ball, or where you think they can hit, move to the best place possible BEFORE they hit (2-4 steps). Biggest mistake here is one step too many, one step too late, after they have already hit.

Pause / split step (2 steps). Often combined with preparation. Hop when they hit, turn in the air, land and then:

Pursue (4-6 steps): move towards the ball, adjusting when you get close to line your stroke up.

Be a Predator/ Pounce: Load, explode, then rest. This isn't a marathon, don't pace yourself. You want to avoid marathon mode: "Oh dear god, I'm going to be out here for hours, take it easy (lazy), pace myself."

This kind of thinking, marathon thinking (conserve energy) is footwork's biggest enemy. Think short term: move now. Tennis is a series of sprints, not a long race. Take it one shot at a time, worry about your energy in one shot at a time. You can't predict the future. When you're done, you can look back with pride and amazement how much exercise you got.

From my personal perspective, teaching is particularly hard here. "I've got six hours, better go slow." Maybe that makes some sense, but playing a match for 1.5-2 hours, do yourself a favor and go all in. You'll be so much happier.

Tennis is a dance. The music plays while the point is on, like musical chairs. Keep dancing. Look at Federer, what a great role model. Music stops, "find a chair", take a rest. There are natural breaks, you don't go all out, all the time. No one could do that. Between points, take a mini break. Most of the time you spend on the court is in between points. There is plenty of recovery time. Don't worry. We play for 5-10 seconds and then have 20 seconds before the next point begins. 90 seconds on a change over. Rest is built in. Just don't take a break, or extend your break into when the ball is in play.

Of course, we're battling some psychological and even genetic tendencies. First, deep down, we don't really want to move unless we have to. And the problem with that is to be effective we should start before we know if movement is required.

There are a lot of points when we get ready, move into position, split step and even start to pursue, before we even know they missed the shot. Or hit it to us, or our partner, or where we could even get it. And if we don't prepare every time, we are too far behind to catch up, if they make the shot.

"I could have got that." – this is my absolute greatest pet peeve. I am saying, admitting, that I could have got a ball if I had just committed to playing. Drives me crazy. And still we don't move. How many times do we must "learn" this?

Why are we lazy? What's the payoff? Well, genetically, were programmed to conserve energy, because earlier times, we weren't sure when we would be able to eat and drink again. We had very inconsistent food sources in hunter / gatherer days. Now, with Diablo Foods just down the street, we should be able to go all out, all the time, but we're just not wired that way, and we need to convince ourselves, almost every point, that they'll be a cheeseburger and a cool beverage waiting for us, and we don't need to conserve and store energy so much. In fact, we might even want to burn off a few calories so we can eat what we want. Ha ha. "Play hard: you earned that 'diet' cheesecake."

Our Tennis History

Styles of Play

I've been involved in tennis for fifty years. I remember fondly my idols, Rod Laver and Kenny Rosewall. They were the top players in the world in my youth. Much like the elite players now, they were so good that they were still the top players late into their 30s and even 40s. (Rosewall was in the finals of Wimbledon and Forest Hills in 1974 at age 39). They were so much better than everyone else that they were competitive when they were ten years older than the average opponent.

However, if you watch videos of their matches, the style of play is so different from today's tennis. They were master shot makers, and the game looked graceful, almost like a tactical ballet, or a chess match. Grace and artistry, skill and precision. And it looks really, really, really slow, compared to today's masters. Did I say SLOW? They played with wood racquets, and three of the four slams were played on grass, where the ball bounces lower, and was much harder to have pace and keep the ball in (besides the serve).

Looking at how the game of tennis has evolved in the past 50 years can aid us in how we play. The methods that the top players use can be employed by us, at the club level, playing with our peers. What follows is some rather large generalizations about the game then, and now, but they are useful in our overall building of our style of play.

As I often say, there are four basic weapons in tennis: **time (speed and distance), placement, spin and deception**.

1970: In 1970, the pros used all four weapons, but I would say that placement was king. It was a chess match, moving the ball around the court. And the way they used time was very different. Players would come to the net (serve and volley, chip and charge) to take their opponent's time away. Lob to buy more time. There was much less spin, and a lot more of the spin was underspin, to keep the ball low, especially on grass. Deception was key to getting the ball by a player, as no one was hitting particularly hard.

To summarize, in 1970:

- Targeting was aggressive (aim near the lines, i.e. 3-4 feet in)
- Hitting was conservative (hit at a slower speed)

2020 (we're almost there, five months away)

What's different? Power and spin. The shots hit in the modern game are much harder, and they have a lot more spin. Power and spin are king. Spin has the dual role of keeping the ball in, and making it harder to track / return. Power reduces the time the opponent has to react. Players use ball speed now to reduce the opponent's time, rather than come to the net as much. Placement (other than get it in) has been much more downplayed. Hit shots you can make, with lots on them, rather than place a shot precisely to a spot to force errors or hit winners. I think of the French Open final, with two primarily

defensive players, Nadal and Thiem, hitting harder and with more spin, than anyone else in the tournament. You got the feeling that no matter how hard they hit, they wouldn't miss, And that they were hitting hard (with spin) precisely because that made them more consistent. Power and spin is the defensive game. Amazing. It seems a contradiction. Deception isn't as important, as players do not come to the net as much, although a good drop shot is effective in singles, a lob in doubles.

To summarize in 2020:

- Targeting is more conservative (aim for the middle, large margin for error, i.e. 10-12 feet in)
- Hitting much more aggressive (speed and spin).

Grips: this all plays out in the difference in techniques used in 1970 and 2020, and that starts with the grips. In 1970, with three of the four slams played on grass, most players were using a continental grip or eastern grips to cope best with the low bounces on grass. With the game growing in popularity and becoming more a sport for everyone (grass courts are rare, expensive and hard to maintain), the main surfaces are now hard court or clay (Three of the four modern Slams). These courts have much higher average bounces, and so the grips have changed to semi-western or full western. And there are many more two-handed backhands, which cope with the high bounce to the backhand much better.

What Is the Same: The shot that wasn't that different in 1970 and 2020 is the serve. It has always been the biggest shot, the most aggressive, the most important. Elite servers from the past, Kramer, Gonzales, Ashe, Newcombe, other big servers, would all do very well serving today. The technique really hasn't changed that much. Targeting is similar too. Wide, middle, body, and there has always been a lot of spin. Most players use the continental grip today to serve, just like yesteryear. All four weapons are fully in play and essential to success. Serving, not much change. Most everything else has.

Volleying technique is another throwback to the 70s. It's still about placement. Most players still use the continental grip when they come to the net, or the Eastern forehand and backhand. Not the radical grips of 2020 baseline play. The challenge, and why we don't see as much volleying today is that it's hard to place a ball that is coming to us so fast, with so much spin. Especially if the ball gets low.

Takeaways for the rest of us: What can club players learn? Hit better groundstrokes (harder, more spin) to bigger targets. We really see this in doubles. Hit the ball hard up the middle. That's your best play, safest play, most aggressive play. When we play to the edges, we make far too many mistakes. With big, makeable targets, we can go for it much more.

Professional Error: There is an old saying that when a pro makes an error, it's a winner, while when a club player makes an error, the ball is out. Obviously, the pro's shots are not usually as far off target as the club player's, but the main reason for this is that the pros don't aim as close to the lines. When they miss the target, the ball is still in, close to the line, and often a winner or tough shot to handle. Where the club player aims closer to the lines, and when they miss, the ball is out.

In conclusion, model the serve and net play on traditional skills and styles (the 70s), tactics, baseline and return play on 2020. Good luck out there!

Summer Junior Program

Welcome to the Orindawoods Summer Junior program lead by Head Pro Patric Hermanson and assisted by MHS Head Coach Michael McCollom and our excellent, experienced Junior Tennis Staff. Join us for a great summer of tennis fun.

Full Afternoon Clinic

Ages 7-16

Monday-Thursday 12 to 3:45 p.m.

Cost: \$220 member / \$245 non-member

Instruction Block

Ages 7-16

Monday – Thursday 12 to 2 p.m.

Cost \$140 members / \$155 non-members

Match Play Block

Ages 7-16

Monday – Thursday 2:15 to 3:45 p.m.

Cost \$115 members / \$130 non-members

Lil' Ones Clinic

Ages 4-6

Monday and Wednesday 11:00-11:45 a.m.

Cost: \$45 members / \$50 non-members

Clinic Sessions:

Session 7	July 22-25
Session 8	July 29-Aug 1

Our Story, Our Philosophy

Here at the Orindawoods Tennis Club we look forward to providing your child with an exciting and challenging tennis experience. We are experts in fun! We pride ourselves on our positive and nurturing tennis learning environment. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced player looking to improve your strokes, strategy and footwork, our Instruction Block Clinic is the class for you. If you want to improve your ability to compete and manage your competition points, sign up for our Match Play Block. Want to get that all-around experience? The sign up for the Full Afternoon Clinic and get both of the above blocks at a great price. Our Lil' Ones Clinic, for the 4-6 year old has new days and times. Classes are Monday and Wednesdays at 11 a.m.

To Register For Classes: Contact Patric Hermanson:
Patric@orindawoodstennis.com

- Checks are made out to **Orindawoods**

Discount: 10% off of the second child's registration in the same week. The discount is taken off the smaller of the two clinic costs.