



Orindawoods Tennis News

April 2020

Vol: 26, Issue 4

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

Yearly Renewal

Ball Machine Club

If you are an annual Ball Machine Club member, or would like to become one, now is the time to renew or enroll. For \$110 you get a membership in our famous Ball Machine Club for one year. The price of admission comes with a key to the shed, so that you can play during "off" hours, when staff may not be present to let you in the ball shed.

The ball machine is a great way to work on your game, get exercise, release tension and even meet fellow ball machine enthusiasts (like-minded people) who may become future tennis partners.

A couple of rules to remember about the ball machine.

- You sign up for the machine by reserving court #3
- Ball machine reservations are for 1 hour (rather than the 1.5 hours for regular reservations). You may need to adjust the automatic setting on the website to 1 hour.
- Please have the balls picked up by the end of your hour. Don't cut into someone else's time by being late. Not cool.
- Pick up all the balls. If we lose 2-3 balls an hour (5-6 reservations per day, 7 day/wk), the machine will be half empty by Sunday.

The cost is \$110 for the year, make the check to "Orindawoods." If you are a new ball machine club member, and don't have a key yet, get one at the Pro Shop. Keep the key in your tennis bag. The Ball Machine Membership runs from March 2020 to March 2021.

The 2020 Social Tennis Calendar

As always, we have a large number of events planned for the social tennis season. When we can start will be determined by the COVID-19 situation, but we hope it passes and we can be safe & together soon.

Tulip Games

The Tulip Games are scheduled for Sunday, May 3rd from 4-8 p.m. at the Club. The Tulip Games are our traditional tennis social season opener. Because of somewhat ify weather, this will be a potluck event, so no charge. Just come out, play, see your friends! Sign up for a main course, salad, side or dessert. We'll play mix and match tennis for 2 hours, followed by dinner on the deck. Contact Keith or John Bockman if you would like to sign up.

Just Because Tournament

Our annual Just Because Tournament, held just because _____ (we love tennis, love Orindawoods, love our friends, etc ... fill in the blank, pick one or all) is scheduled for June 28th from 4-9 p.m. at the Tennis Club. The cost is \$10 for the main course which we will provide (and of course margaritas), and everyone will bring a side dish or dessert.

Twilight Tennis Season

The Twilight Tennis Season is rapidly approaching. The dates for Twilights this summer are:

Sunday, July 26th 5-9 p.m.

Sunday, August 16th, 5-9 p.m.

2020 Lesson Rates

Keith & Patric

| | |
|------------------|------|
| 1/2 hour private | \$45 |
| 1 hour private | \$80 |

Jennifer

| | |
|------------------|------|
| 1/2 hour private | \$40 |
| 1 hour private | \$75 |

Non-members add \$5

Junior Clinic Pricing: see junior page

25 Year Celebration!

Our Executive Tennis Director Keith Wheeler has been at Orindawoods for 25 years this June, and we are going to celebrate. Come join us for a party (we are so creative, always looking for reasons to have a great time, and this is a good one). Details are still being arranged but look for a date at the end of July or early August. Stay tuned!

Weekly Lessons

Hit and Fit:

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

Friday 10:30-12 noon \$20

Saturday 7:30-9 a.m. \$20

Register by e-mailing Keith or drop in

Tuesday Ladies' Clinic:

Tuesdays at 9:30 \$5

Thursday Men's Clinic:

Thursdays at 9:30 \$5

The weekly clinics are drop-in.

Court Washing

We start our monthly court washing in April middays on Friday, the first and last Fridays of the month. Check the court scheduler to see what courts are being washed and when. Keeping the club clean is a high priority. Sorry for any inconvenience.

Quote of the Month:

"In a great storm the wise bird returns to her nest and waits patiently."
– I Ching.



Orindawoods Tennis Club

650 Orindawoods Dr.
Orinda, CA 94563

Phone:
925-254-1065

Website:
orindawoodstennis.com

Smart Phone Reservation App:
PlayTennisConnect

Facebook:
Orindawoods Tennis Club

Executive Tennis Director:
Keith Wheeler
keith@orindawoodstennis.com

Head Pro:
Patric Hermanson
patric@orindawoodstennis.com

Associate Pro
Jennifer Conway
jenniferlynconway@gmail.com

Tennis Staff:
Olivia Rhee, Emma Hermanson

Weekend Staff:
Peter Reaves

Newsletter Editor:
Keith Wheeler

Sunday, September 13th, 4-8 p.m.
Sunday, October 11th, 4-8 p.m.

Twilights feature 2 hours of mix-and-match social tennis, followed by dinner on the clubhouse deck. We serve filet mignon or grilled chicken breast, from Kinder's meats. All the sides and fixings are included. Please bring your own beverage of choice (as tastes and price ranges vary), though we often provide margaritas as well. As the date approaches, contact Keith or John Bockman to sign up.

Monday Night Team Tennis

Save the date. Monday Night Team Tennis is scheduled to begin on Monday, May 4th. We will play every Monday of the summer (except for 5/25, Memorial Day) through August. We divide the participants into teams for the summer season, then play three rounds of tennis each Monday evening, keeping track of the scores from every game played. At the end of the summer, a champion is crowned, and awards are given to each and every player, including the famous "Loser's Clinic" to the last place team. It's great fun, and dinner is served each evening after tennis. The main dish is provided, and the members of team in charge of dinner that night will provide the sides. The cost is \$50 for the summer for members.

Tennis in Times of Uncertainty

These are tough times. No idea where we will be when you receive this. But as tennis players, we experience this uncertainty every day. We have been training for years to deal with uncertainty. Don't forget your training. You have all done it.

Tennis teaches, forces us, to live in the moment. And we fight it all the way. We look for ways to ensure the desired outcome, but they are all flawed. There are no guarantees, and tennis reminds us that every time we play. Every point.

One way we try to escape, is we look for one key part of our stroke, that will unlock the whole thing, but the stroke is a series of often very complex movements, done in an ideal sequence. One idea may help getting it going, but if we get the sequence all mixed up, or we focus only on one part, and not the flow from one step to the next, we have a mess (of errors). (see "A Receiving Game").

Another attempted escape from reality was shared by sports psychologist Allen Fox, who once quipped, "I finally figured out how to take the stress out of tennis. To win all the time. I just never play anyone who is any good."

Many have tired this strategy, to try to insure victory. But we know we have loaded the dice, no matter how much we kid ourselves, and some of the thrill of winning is somewhat lost, no matter how much we try to fool ourselves. For much of the thrill comes from the edginess of the uncertainty and coming through. Risk, no matter how unpleasant, is tied to reward.

And what if you load the dice, and still somehow lose. Or come down to their level. Then what, dear ego? That is brutal. The stories we tell ourselves, the tales we spin.... "The sun was in my hair; the wind was in my eyes." (sic).

Even if we assemble all the best players, have the strongest team possible, take all the lessons, we may still not win. Or if we do win, it might turn out to not be what we thought it was going to be or give us. What we gave up, or lost, to pursue our dream of winning, might poison the joy.

Tennis keeps bringing us back to this: what we have is the moment. Whatever it brings. Sometimes we win, sometimes we lose. And all we can do is our best. This moment, however terrible, or wonderful, will pass on to the next one. One moment follows another. Don't miss one instant of living, lost in wishing, or worrying, or hoping it would be different. Or trying to plot some way out. Life is enough. Playing is enough.

Tennis has taught us this. It's a metaphor for life. The next ball is coming. Play it. Best wishes.

Tennis Tip:

A Receiving Game

Tennis is primarily a receiving game. The problem is virtually all of us see tennis as a sending (or hitting) game. When we think of tennis, we think of hitting, of sending the ball over the net, of hitting winners, or ripping it. There is fun in watching them run. When we go out to play, we often say, "Let's go out and hit some." Or "happy hitting."

And yet, when we study the game, play matches, practice, there starts to become an awareness that receiving the ball is at least as equally important, if not more so. There are many ways to say this. Ways that you have probably

heard for years. "I need to wait for the ball to come to me." "I need to work on my footwork, get to the ball better." "Watch the ball!" "Watch the contact point."

Watch the ball, move your feet, plus keep your head down, ... are receiving skills. They are to help position you so you can get to the ball, and play.

In fact, if you hang around excellent players, these are the things they are talking about, not complex tactics and strategies. This is how you win; you make shots. You get in position, and you do good strokes. Take care of business.

Tennis, the best game I never saw. You shouldn't watch your shot leaving the racquet. Think Federer here, and his famous head down position. Long after the ball leaves. The ball must be close to crossing the net before he looks up. Done properly, we literally do not see our shot, at least for the first several feet after contact.

A more brutally honest way to put it. Are you playing to win, or to watch? Are you a player, or a fan? A tourist?

Why do we do something that hurts our chance for success? Well...

The ego lives on the other side of the net. The ego lives for one thing: results. Except results are so important to the ego that the ego often acts in ways that sabotage those very results. It can't help itself.

Like taking the eye off the ball. The ego wants to know the future so badly, that it forgets we live in the present.

There is a sequence of play in tennis. In order to master the game, we need to do the sequence in order. Position, get ready, read the shot, turn, move to the ball, prepare the racquet, receive the ball, send the ball, recover, position.... on and on.

Receiving comes before sending. Sending is based on how successful the receiving was accomplished. It's sort of like the serve. If you don't get the serve in, there are no more shots. If you don't return the serve, there are no more shots. So the serve and the return are the two most important shots, and the two shots you hit the most frequently.

Tennis is a receiving game. We need to receive the ball, or not much good happens after that.

Too Much Bounce. Hitting, or striking the ball, as opposed to catching and throwing, causes the ball to bounce away far too quickly, and causes us to have less than ideal control.

When the ball comes really fast, or in a difficult way, our first impulse may be to blast it back. Or block it. But after we try that a few times, or a few hundred times (thousand?), we realize that won't work. There is too much energy.

The problem is, the ball is determining what we do here. While it is true that we must adjust what we do to the flight path, bounce and speed of the ball, we still have choices and options as to how to respond. Ideally, we want to play the ball, not have the ball play us.

Release. When you play the ball, always release. The release is the way the ball slips off the strings when you roll it (spin it), or the way a ball slips out of your hand when you toss it. Good releasing usually involves some acceleration. Even with no backswing, little or no racquet momentum, you can almost always finish. A block with a follow through.

The release is based on how well you receive the ball. If you catch the ball, hold the ball well, you can release it properly. The modern tennis stroke is designed to optimize the transition between catch and release. We speed the racquet face up to impart spin, to roll the ball (topspin, underspin, sidespin). Spin is how we control the ball.

The bottom line is, if you are not going slow enough when you receive the ball, you probably can't speed up to release it. If you catch, you can always send. So, follow through. Why don't we?

The Nature of Timing. Often, we don't send / follow through (accelerate) when we are early or late. We are either slamming on the breaks to wait for the ball (we're early) or rushing / racing to catch up with the ball (we're late) and thus unfortunately slamming into the ball so it goes careening away.

The problem here is we are trying to time the swing, time the contact. A moving ball, a moving racquet, equals a big problem. This represents a fundamental misconception about how tennis could be played for best possible results. Ideally, we don't want to time the contact, but time the transition between catching and sending, receiving and releasing, going slow, absorbing, and accelerating and releasing.

How?!?!?!? But you might say this contact happens so fast, how can we possibly do this? Contact with a tennis ball last 3-4 thousandths of a second. How can there be a catch, drive and release in that short period of time. And how can we possibly "control" that? Certainly not with my conscious mind. And yet the best players do control that interaction, that energy exchange. And they are humans, just like you. But perhaps they have a different feel, or approach.

What does happen? In a contact moment in tennis, there is always some hitting, or bouncing, and some catching, rolling and releasing. If we can shape the stroke to emphasize more the catching and releasing, and downplay the swinging, bouncing and hitting, we will have more control over our shots, how and where we want to send them, and therefore our results.

Practically, what does this all feel like? What do I do to receive the ball better? So much of this is about an attitude, a frame of mind. A presence, being in the moment. I love the term Satori: one with what you are doing. Watching the ball helps here. Watching the incoming ball. Watching the ball connects us to reality, so does moving our feet. Again, something that we are doing right here and now, rather than thinking or focusing on a future outcome (where the ball goes, winning the point, set, match, league, going to Nationals, winning Wimbledon, being admitted to the Tennis Hall of Fame). In general, when we are receiving frame of mind, we are softer, slower, calmer, there is less rushing, no frantic or panic moves. Hold the racquet loosely, move it slowly. Get into position early, so you don't feel compelled to rush. We may need to move quick, but never fast (panic).

Elite players hold on to this feeling, this attitude, at all costs. The choice between losing a point, and losing your mind is an easy one for them. They will NOT make a frantic attempt to rescue a single point, knowing that it will lead to more frantic, rushed, hurried, unsettled feelings, and that is going to be very bad for results. Observe how calm a pro is after they miss a shot (if they are playing well).

What if it all goes wrong? We miss a shot, or don't control it in the way we desire. What is next is essential. For as Tim Galloway once wrote the great duality: "you will make errors, and there is no reason to make errors." Both truths exist in the mind of the master. 1) Attention to the moment, the task, the belief in the process of stroking and the skill to carry it out, and also 2) grace, acceptance, forgiveness on the occasions when it all goes wrong.

If you fail in this shot attempt, it is all about the response. If you succeed, it is all about the response. The problem to solve is what I do with the next one. The one I'm playing next, not the mistake itself. Or the success. Don't live in the past. Often the hardest shot to make is right after you have made a really good one (double faults often follow aces). But turning around a string of errors, or "being off my game" is difficult too. In the present, we prepare for the future.

We create our own reality. "Two men looked through prison bars, one saw mud, one saw stars." What we look for is often what we get. The ball can come to us exactly the same way, and if we are scared, it seems fast, and if we are calm, it seems slow. It's the same ball, but perception is key. Attitudes change reality, to an important degree.

Catching is a slow process. We slow down, we get soft, we watch the ball, everything calms down, we have more time. Hitting, sending is a speeding up process. It's aggressive, fast, it makes everything seem faster.

If you are receiving, you tend to be calm, if you are hitting / sending, you tend to be jumpy and nervous. When we slow down, try to perceive each step of an action, a stroke, the world seems to slow down, and we actually have time to accomplish more. It has been said that quickness is doing slow well. While when we rush, or go fast, we tend to leave important moves out. Like receiving. The nuance of catching is lost, and the ball is blasted away. Control lost.

Sometimes we worry if all our focus is on receiving, we won't be able to send the ball. Which is clearly the next step, and what puts the ball back on the other side of the net (to keep our ego company in Results Land).

Don't worry, you won't forget to send the ball. That need to send is far too hardwired to forget. In fact, you will send it better, because you received it well. Once we confidently have the ball, we are much more likely to go for the release, to really follow through, to send the ball better than ever. I've never seen anyone forget to hit the ball. (that's different than swinging and missing, which usually comes from too much swinging, too much attempting to send, and not enough receiving – People that are receiving seldom miss).

If you're not going slow enough, you probably can't speed up. Accelerate. Remember the rhyme, mantra: slow to go.

I know there is a bit of trust involved here. And the impulse to want to swing or send is strong, but if we can stay present, and in sync with what we are doing, with reality, we will catch when it is time to catch, and send when it is time to send. We blend our motions, our stroke, with the ball and the appropriateness of our actions will lead to far better results. Good luck out there!

Spring Junior Program 2020

The Junior Program starting date is subject to state of the COVID-19 outbreak at that time. Stay tuned.

The 2020 Spring Junior Clinics begin the week of **April 6th**, and will continue thru the week of **May 25th**. No classes the week of March 30th. The 8-week program will be led by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson**. The Level 1 and II classes will be taught using aspects of the USTA Red, Orange, Green, Yellow (ROGY) Development Program.

| <u>Level</u> | <u>Class</u> | <u>Time(s)</u> | <u>One day/week</u> | <u>Two Days</u> |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| I | <u>Lil' Ones</u> | Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm | \$117* | \$180* |
| | <i>The Lil' Ones class is for the always adorable 4-6 year olds. We will be developing the coordination and balance of these young players as well as giving them an introduction to tennis using age appropriate balls and court size.</i> | | | |
| II | <u>Future Stars Group</u> | Tuesdays 4-5:30pm | \$210* | N/A |
| | <i>The Future Stars Group is for our 7 to 10 year old players. The players will be working with 10 and under balls on 36', 60' and full courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games, and match play are all part of the curriculum as we work our way up to green dot balls and full court.</i> | | | |
| III | <u>Tennis Development Group</u> | Thursdays 4-5:30pm | \$210* | N/A |
| | <i>In the Tennis Development Group we will work on refining technique, improving footwork and developing strategic awareness for successful match play. This class is for beginning through intermediate players ages 11 thru 14.</i> | | | |
| IV | <u>Tournament Training Group</u> | Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm | \$265* | N/A |
| | <i>The Tournament Training Group is an <u>invitation only</u> class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.</i> | | | |

Non-members: add \$25 (\$15 for Lil' Ones). **Inclement Weather:** check orindawoodstennis.com "Live Tennis Cam".