



Orindawoods Tennis News

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

Can You Feel it?

Summer is in the air. Sometime around mid to late March, it kicks in, and suddenly there is tennis in the air, and the Club starts to become busy. Programs are planned, events set up, junior program in place, league teams formed. Here it comes, nine months of action

There is a lot in this month's newsletter, which basically reflects that, the time of year. Enjoy! It's tennis time! Your tennis time!

Tennis and Pickleball.

Reservation Rule Change for Court One

Here at Orindawoods, we have players that play both pickleball and tennis, and it is our goal for these two great games to coexist.

First, Orindawoods is a tennis club. The Club is full of tennis players, and yet, some of us would love to play pickleball as well. There is no way that we, a full club, are going to reduce the number of tennis courts that we have. We need all those courts at busy times. Our members joined a club with seven tennis courts, that could handle the load and demand on those courts. Our membership numbers and income are based on seven tennis courts. It's our obligation as management and owners to make that work.

Second, current reservations for Court One are running about 3 to 1, tennis to pickleball, but pickleball is being played every day. The pickleball launch has been slower than I would have expected, given the media impression out there, but it is steady, and growing. It's a fun game, glad we can find a way to accommodate it, without compromising the tennis we all love.

The need: At times when the tennis play is light, and there are plenty of tennis courts, it would be nice to have the ability to reserve 4 pickleball courts, instead of a pickleball player reserving the entire Court One and no other pickleball players know that they could play at that time too, even though there are 3 open pickleball courts.

So, we have been studying ways that the website can accommodate a multi-use tennis / pickleball court.

For the summer, here is our TRIAL solution, starting April 1st:

- **Court One can be used for both Pickleball and Tennis.** (No pickleball on the Club's other courts)
- **Court one is TENNIS ONLY between 9 and 10:30 a.m. every day.** This is primetime tennis, and we need 7 courts. Tennis players also enjoy 10:30-12, but we're going to see if we can share at this time. Tennis players book Court One at 9 virtually every day, but 10:30 is more open, though heavily used.
- **During Club events, Court One may also be Tennis Only.** This will be determined on a case-by-case basis. For example, MTT may need Court One this summer, maybe not. TBD.
- **Every weekday evening, starting at 6 p.m., Court One is Pickleball Only.** There are rarely tennis programs at this time of day, junior or adult, and so, there are plenty of other courts for people to play tennis on. It stays light until 7:30 or 8.

2024 Club Rates

Tennis Lessons with Keith & Erik:

½ hour private	\$50
1 hour private	\$85

Semi-pvt (2)	\$55ea
Semi-pvt (3)	\$37ea
Semi-pvt (4)	\$28ea
45 min pvt	\$65
1.5-hour pvt	\$125

Non-members add \$5

Club Dues: \$152 / month

Guests: \$10 (1 visit / week). Pay Station located by the Pro Shop door.

Weekly Lessons

Ladies' clinic:	Tues 9:30	\$10
Men's clinics:	Thurs 9:30	\$10

Hit and Fit

Wednesday 11:30-1	1.5 hours
Friday 11:30-1	1.5 hours

The cost is \$20 / class for tennis and TRX

Pickleball Court One

M-F	6-9:30	Pickleball Only 4 cts
Sa/Su	4-9:30	Pickleball Only 4 cts

Ball Machine

Ball Machine Club	\$110 /year
Ball Machine / hour	\$8

- Ball Machine Club runs thru 3/30/24
- Reserve Court 3 to use the machine.
- Reservations are for **1 hour**.
- Pay using Pay Station / credit card
- iPhone app: **Like My Drill**

Racquet Stringing

Patric Hermanson picks up and drops off racquets early on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Patric is an expert stringer. Put some zip back your game, get a restring!

Quote of the Month:

"Things turn out best for people who make the best of the way things turn out."

■ John Wooden

- **Every weekend day (Sat / Sunday), Court One is Pickleball Only from 4pm to 9:30 p.m.** Again, very little conflict with tennis programming at this time of day. And there are 6 other tennis courts to play on.
- **To make a pickleball reservation during “Pickleball Only” times,** make sure at the top of the Court Scheduler (on the website), “Select Location” is on “select” or “pickleball” (not “tennis”). Scroll down past Court 7 to where you see the four pickleball courts, Pickleball SW, Pickleball SE, Pickleball NE, Pickleball NW and reserve one of the 4 pickleball courts for your game. Three other games will be able to reserve at the same time. Hopefully a pickleball festival! Woo hoo!!!! I dream of having 3-4 pickleball courts going at a time! That would be great!
- **Except for 9-10:30 a.m., pickleball players can play pickleball (register for Court One, same first come, first serve as the tennis players - 169 hours in advance).** If you make a pickleball reservation in these “regular” times, you could [e-mail Keith and let him know you are playing pickleball](#), and he can color code your reservation as pickleball. That would let others know there are other pickleball courts available at that time. It would be a thoughtful thing to do, to let your fellow pickleball brethren know there is a court to play on. Unfortunately, members are not able to do this color coding at this time (hopefully the program will update soon).
- **We will try these rules out for the Spring/Summer, early Fall,** while there is more daylight, and Court One can be used in the evening. There is light until at least 7 p.m. for 7-8 months of the year. And these are the most popular months for playing outdoor sports, and generally the best weather.
- Finally, **pickleball players kindly ask tennis players to consider choosing another court first before booking court one for tennis,** as it is the only place members can play pickleball. We understand that Court One is very

popular, and therefore may be your first choice for tennis. Fair enough, everyone has equal rights to make that reservation (except 9-10:30), and pickleball players can try to get it first. Orindawoods is a shared use facility. Thank you!

Orindawoods Tennis Club

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Court Construction.

Phase Three of our Club Refresh is taking place this summer. In the last three years, 1) we have patched and colored Court One, creating pickleball play, combined with tennis, 2A) rebuilt Courts 2&3 with a mat covering all existing cracks and issues, and 2B) rebuilt the pool heater room (consistent pool and spa temperatures all summer long— woo hoo!!!). We are looking into a landscaping refresh for the Tennis Club, and other significant changes / amenities to the property in the next few years. 3) In 2024, we are going to patch and color Courts 4-7, making them like new, and covering the cracks that have developed there.

This work is scheduled for July 29- August 2, basically between our summer programs / leagues, and our fall programming. While Courts 2&3 are our most heavily booked courts, Court 4-7 is where most club member play takes place, as well as league play. We're looking forward to fixing this biggest, and final part of our court refresh. Orindawoods has the best court in the area. Enjoy!

Summer Social Tennis:

Monday Team Tennis

Monday Team Tennis, our Monday night tennis social for all levels starts Monday, May 6th. We play from 6-8 p.m., with dinner to follow.

This year, we are going to make a few changes to MTT:

First, we are going to limit MTT to Club members, almost exclusively. (There may be an exception for a close friend or two). In the past we made up numbers with non-members, and I think it changed the feel of the event. While we were grateful that people would want to join us, Mondays stopped feeling like home.

Second, it will still be a team competition, but the teams will change week to week, so that if you are on a “weak” team, you are not locked into that for the entire summer. Each match will include men's doubles, women's doubles, mixed doubles. You sign up for the season but can come which weeks work best for you. Each week, for dinner, someone will oversee a main course (to be reimbursed), with others bringing side dishes. Monday Team Tennis will run from May 6 to August 19, and we will not have MTT on Memorial Day (May 27) or July 29 (court construction). So, there should be a total of 14 Mondays.

Without non-members, MTT maybe a bit smaller this summer, but everyone will always get to play, hopefully most every round, and there will be much less sitting out. We believe it will be a much better member experience.

Social tennis should be for all members, including the higher-level players. Matches will be divided by level, so stronger players normally playing with stronger players, beginners more with beginners. More fun, more competitive. For example, if Team A plays Team B, and the match is 3 men's doubles and 3 women's doubles, the men's doubles teams will be picked so that the first team is stronger than the second, second stronger than the third, etc.... Same for the women. Of course the majority of players fall somewhere in between elite and beginner, and will shift around. I'd love to see 4.0+, 3.5, and 3.0 players sign up for the summer. This would be fun! A tennis party for all.

The format can handle varying attendance quite easily, so no problem. Some nights will be bigger than others, but they will always include tennis, food, friendship, and fun. MTT is a great way for new members to meet some of the crew and get involved. And therefore, MTT is a great place for long-time members to find new people to fill out their foursomes.

The cost is \$60 for the entire summer season. Join us for a fun summer of social, but competitive-format tennis! Register with Keith (keith@orindawoodstennis.com).

Summer Junior Tennis Program

It's time to grab a spot or many in our summer junior tennis program. See Page 8 for Head Pro Erik Oehlschlager's Orindawoods Tennis Club Junior Program for 2024. It's a great, comprehensive program, and Erik would be happy to help you find a place for your junior, or juniors. Erik has also included the dates for the rest of the junior program for the next year. We are experiencing amazing junior success at the club, more kids than ever before. The joy is palpable each afternoon. It's almost summertime, don't get caught without a fun place to go!

Pool Opening Date: Early May

We're getting close to the opening date for the pool. Of course, there are always some spectacularly beautiful days in April where we wonder, "Why isn't the pool open?" And the answer is, the pool just doesn't get used that much in April (and May & Sept / October too, even though we have it open). Most of the pool use is in June, July, and August (when the kids are out of school). But there are enough nice days, and usage in May (and in the fall) to have the pool open. In April, not quite enough. If nice spring days land on a weekend, we really wonder. Need to plan that better. ☺

We will open the pool **Friday May 3**, and the season will run through **Monday, October 29th**. Last summer was spectacular in our pool world, as our new heaters took the mystery out of the pool and spa temperature, and it was always wonderfully the same. Pool 83 degrees, spa 103 degrees. Every single day! This past week Picture Perfect Pools, our contractor, replaced the pool lighting, which was also old and tired. We're living the dream! The pool dream.

Spring Cleaning

We are about to toss everything in the Lost and Found, it's been there for months. And, in addition, we have a fine collection of the finest, and most expensive luxury water bottles on the planet, that we are getting ready to toss as well. If you think your bottle is here, there are probably enough for everyone who owns (or owned and lost) a bottle in the Club, then come on down and look! They are going to go bye bye. Thanks!

I really love it when someone finds something that has been lost. Somehow that is heartwarming to me, so I hope you come down and look, you might be surprised what you see / find. Perhaps an old friend. A lucky t-shirt that when you wear it, you simply can't lose. I had one of those, didn't wash it for the whole season either, didn't want to lose the mojo! Probably smelled better than some of the stuff in the current lost and found. Ugh. (See, a scented newsletter)

A Year of Ball Machine Practice:

Ball Machine Club

It's time to register for the yearly Ball Machine Club, if that is how you enjoy some of your tennis. The fee is \$110 for the year, with unlimited use when the machine is available. Court 3 has become our busiest court, with ball machine users playing most of the day. With the ball machine membership, comes a key so you can access the machine after hours. If you haven't signed up for the year, March 2024 to March 2025, yet please do so by seeing Keith. He always has a card reader with him and can take your payment. If you don't join the ball machine club, you can pay \$8 / hour to use the machine. Just reserve court 3, and you can pay on the kiosk in the lobby by the office door. Happy hitting!

Tulip Tournament

Our spring social, the Tulip Tournament, will be held on **Sunday, May 19th**. We will play Mix and Match Doubles from 4-6 p.m., with Dinner on the Tennis Club deck to follow. We'll BBQ sausages and veggie burgers. The cost will be \$20 / player. Bring a guest if you like, but this will be primarily for members and

OW Tennis Socials 2024

5/6 – 8/19, MTT every
Monday evening 6pm
5/19 Tulip Tournament
6/23 Just Because
Tournament
7/28 Twilight Tennis BBQ
8/18 Twilight Tennis BBQ
9/15 Twilight Tennis BBQ
10/6 Twilight Tennis BBQ

Mark your calendars!
Join us!

close friends. In the past we made up numbers with non-members, and I think it changed the feel of the events. While we were grateful that people would want to join us, it stopped feeling like home. This year we are focusing on the members. **To register:** Contact Keith (keith@orindawoodstnenis.com).

Pickleball Playdays

Every night (6-9:30pm weekdays, 4-9:30pm weekends) there will be pickleball only on Court One, with multiple reservations available (see rule change above). We're hoping this will increase pickleball play and some of these players will start wanting to play together. So, in a sense, we could have a pickleball payday every night. Right now, we don't have someone to host the action, so it is going to have to grow organically. Don't be shy, suggest a friend or two meet you for pickleball this evening!

Parent Tennis Tip:

Junior Development

As a young tennis pro, and especially a stepfather, I always wanted a manual that would tell me what kids, even teenagers, were capable of at certain ages. Head Pro Erik and I talk a lot about this, each drawing on our years of experience, and he builds our excellent Junior Program around these concepts.

And parents, they have never gone on this journey (raising kids) before, and really have no idea what is involved in raising a tennis player, and it would be helpful to have some tips and clues from people that have spent their whole life, first as kids and then as adults, players, parents, and teachers, in this world.

There is an excellent little manual by Wayne Bryan, *Raising Your Child to Be a Champion*. Wayne was a successful tennis teaching pro and the father of Mike and Bob Bryan, the very successful twins, and doubles pair. As the title suggests, it's all about raising children. Wayne insisted that his kids 1) got straight A's, 2) played a sport, 3) played a musical instrument. Seems somewhat heavy-handed, even cookie-cutter, but what follows is an amazing plan, some trial and error, on how to lovingly raise children toward success. I'll reference this book several times here, plus much of what Erik and I have learned from USTA, USPTA and years of teaching as we talk about junior development.

So where to begin? At the beginning. When can kids start playing tennis? Well, let's start before that. Sit with your young child or grandchild on the floor and roll a ball (perhaps bigger than a tennis ball) back and forth. A fellow coach and dad used a balloon. Spread your legs out so you can catch any errant tosses. This can start very young.

Key Point #1: The important thing here is and will continue to be — forever — **have fun**. This goes for the “adult” too. It's play folks. If you miss this point, you're going to go missing somewhere on the path. Trust me, lost in “hell.”

“We set out to find God, but we keep stopping for long periods at mean-spirited roadhouses?” – Rumi

Some people are incredibly strong willed (a quality admired in our culture), pain and suffering can go on for years, but if the fun is lost, even in the distant past, this train is going to go off the rails. It's only a matter of time, and even despite sometimes incredible worldly success (winning and ranking, fame and fortune). Gloat all you want now about how you or your kid is different... the bill comes due.

As adults and playing pros, the Bryan Brothers had a band, and they would play at events like Indian Wells, entertaining crowds in the tennis garden. Their dad played in the band. That family didn't go off the rails.

I recently played (not tennis) with a 14-month-old, and he thought it was great fun to hold the ball, and then drop it. Probably enjoyed the adults picking it up for him as well. Already king of the court. Trust me, talk to an elite athlete, they are pretty clear they are the center of the universe. This one has a real future. Excellent training. ☺

The Test: What about starting tennis? (dare I say “real tennis” – Danger Will Robinson). Stand opposite your future Wimbledon champion (I know, I know, my sarcasm is intense sometimes, only comes from my personal pain and suffering on both sides of that mythical first tossed ball). Look at their eyes. Toss them a ball. Keep watching their eyes. If their eyes go up and down, watching the ball go up and down, they are ready for tennis. Tennis is a three-dimensional game; it takes relatively advanced tracking skills. If they are not quite ready, i.e. they look straight ahead and expect the ball to land in their hands, keep fun and practice two dimensional, rolling the ball on the floor. (For example, kids can start soccer younger than tennis). T-ball works too, something to hold the ball while they hit it. We have sticks with a string and Velcro that can hold the ball in mid-air for the young ones.

This three-dimensional ball tracking skill kicks in somewhere between 4 and 6 years old, and no amount of practice makes it come faster. When it is time, it is time. And “failure” isn't fun. and breaks the first rule, which I think you remember — this a sharp crowd — is have fun. Don't sacrifice their joy trying to force something they can't do. There might be a life lesson for us all somewhere in there....

So, our K and TK classes (Kindergarten and transition Kindergarten) are all about fun, and athletic skills: how to move, and use your body. First and second graders start to hit the ball more often. Forehands and backhands mainly.

Key point #2: Junior development, athletic development, is a progression. If they can't run properly, track a ball, or catch a ball, or even hit a ball, they are not going to be able to do the next thing in the progression. Some studies even suggest that if kids don't learn certain skill at the optimum age, it is very hard to make that up later. So, walking /

talking 1-3, running 3-5, skipping, jumping, etc.... A kid that didn't learn to run properly, not only forward, but a bit later: side stepping, back peddling, skipping, jumping, will always be at a handicap in their tennis life. Kids need to get out and move around, and with a racquet, that is even more interesting.

As an example of a different development and missing the prime learning window: I know I had a lot of hearing problems in the developmental years 1-5 (earaches and such), I had trouble hearing tones. And that impacted my ability to spell, learn foreign languages and sing, my entire life. In high school, I would get 5 A's and a B or C in Spanish (working harder in Spanish than all the others combined, twice fold). That deflates the old GPA, and limits college choices. Some things like my hearing damage, I couldn't do anything about, but it has impacts, and we certainly don't want to create impacts that were avoidable. Like becoming comfortable with my body in movement.

So even if your kid doesn't become a tennis star, it is important for their entire development into full functioning and happy adults, to learn some of these skills at the proper time, and tennis is a great way to do it.

Key Point #3: I saw Sofia Kenin, future Australian Open Champion, French Open Finalist, hit when she was 5 years old. She was already better than most of the adults in our Club. "I came right out and said Sofia was the scariest little creature I'd ever seen. It was unique: the hand-eye coordination and her ability to take the ball immediately right after the bounce. I have a lot of kids do that, but it was almost like it was baked in already, even though she was little, and the racquet was actually bigger than her. The only player I've seen like that was Martina Hingis." – world-famous junior development coach Rick Macchi who coached Sofia in her elementary school years.

The point being, if you have one of those, "you'll know it". Can't be missed. By anyone. Our program at Orindawoods is aimed at the other 99.999% of the population.

I used to have a poster on the wall to keep my sanity. It depicted a package of French fries, and the caption read, "Every parent thinks their kid is going to be an astronaut" Harsh, brutal, but we all think our kids are special. AND, it's because they are. Maybe not Roger Federer, but they have their own unique talents. BTW, my kids are astronauts (ha-ha -- just kidding -- must keep our sense of humor here).

But we don't want to hold our kids back because we underestimate them either. That would be far worse, to stifle a dream. Let them play, encourage them, see what happens. Again, real talent will jump out. And if they are enjoying life, how many trophies they win is irrelevant. They already have the biggest win, you do too: happiness. And there are late bloomers, it is not the most common path, but there are late bloomers, that make it all the way to the top, sometimes.

Key point #4: coordination and athleticism are mostly taught or learned. Yeah, someone may have 1-2% more, a gift, but there have been many #1s in the world that were barely better than average athletes, clearly not the best. I often think of the incredible rivalry and friendship between Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova. Chris, the average athlete, and the mental giant. Martina, the amazing athlete, but had to learn the mental side to compete. Martina showed that mental toughness can be learned as well, because she was anything but, early in her career.

Don't dumb the teaching down because the student is 5 or 85. Pro mechanics can look complicated and appear to require great coordination, but trust me, they are easy and highly repeatable, under extreme "pressure" or "opportunity" (a better word and outlook).

Key Point #5: Another brutal fact about juniors and raising them, there are many with talent, and most skills and coordination are learned, ... but attaining high skills is not the biggest obstacle to success.... keeping them playing is. Most kids play tennis and other sports (and youth activities) for about 2 years, then move on to something else.

This leads us to 3rd graders. As Erik says, "They are trying out everything, and often terribly overbooked." As parents, we think we know what my kids like, or should like... "Danger Will Robinson." These kids are their own people, even this young. You can force a kid to play a sport, but coming down the road, there is this thing called teenagers. Remember, fun keeps kids going. And fun doesn't mean winning, or great grades, but if you attach it to that, well, you'll suffer that fall out too.

Next, 4-6 graders (the ones as third graders, decided — for now — tennis was their thing), these kids, with proper training, can really start to look like tennis players. Smaller, but all the strokes. A couple of kids among these are the future elites, the ranked players, the college players, and perhaps, one may play professionally someday (somebody has to hit the long odds, after all). And of these, the other 98% that look like they have a real knack for tennis, can really look like little adult players at this age with good form. Keep it fun (did I mention this?).

Key Point #6: Coaching. It needs to be positive. And it needs to be coaching. One of my teaching mantras comes from Shunryu Suzuki, who told his students, "Each of you is perfect the way you are, And you can use a little improvement." As a coach, we must correct, and guide, but never beat down or destroy the fun. Especially at this period when kids often teeter on the edge of leaving the game (for other "fun" kid things). Pay attention in this crucial time: As they start to play more and more competitive matches, the pressure starts to ramp up. Our job is to keep the fun higher than the pressure, and they will be fine. Don't assume this will just happen. Orchestrate it. We must strive to balance the stress with more enjoyment all the way through high school and college if they keep playing.

Key Point #7: As 7-9 graders, the kids that have been playing a while (4-5 years) can really start to take off. In those couple of years, they can go from potential to players. And make their high school teams, JV, or varsity. This is the

age, as parents, after years of work, around 12 (hold on parents — you've just been retired and most of you don't know it), when kids start to run their own lives. If you forced tennis on them, duck, b/c if they don't want to do it, a lot of start quitting here. Sometimes after years of training and excellence. Of course this is a tough time for parents, let alone kids, because the parents are still paying the bills, driving the kid to matches, tournaments, and practice, paying for everything, but the kid is basically in charge. Pay close attention to their enjoyment and try to cultivate it.

Key Point #8: A lot of good tennis players start around this time, middle school. Here is the deal: Far too late to be elite, they are 5 years behind, but it is still possible to be very good. Play in high school. They have tried a lot of other sports and chose tennis. **Their choice.** They are highly motivated. Many future teaching pros start at this age. In fact, the vast majority of the good ones. Perhaps because they started as part adult, part child, they can see learning it from both perspectives. And of course, the main reason: Tennis by choice. They can't catch up with the 2% of the gifted ones that started earlier, [the few that] didn't quit, but this "late bloomer" group is usually the best adult players. The players that will be playing 4.0 and 4.5, even 5.0 as 40+ year-olds. Tennis for a lifetime. When an adult joins the club and says, "I want to get back into tennis," I ask them, "Oh, you played?" and the answer is "Back in High School," or "as a junior." This is that player. Almost all your top league players come from this group. The people that started as 40-year-olds, they will generally be the 3.0s and 3.5s. Overgeneralization, but not that far off.

The pre-teen to teen period is often the most frustrating for parents and coaches, as "Junior" clearly has talent, but won't get out there and practice or drill, even though they look accomplished and serious. You used to tell them when they were younger to practice (you took them to tennis clinics and lessons), and they did it, now they won't, and you can't tell them. Can't force them. They must figure it out, figure out that practice really helps. Why don't they get it?

Key Point #9: Delayed gratification. It's one of the last developmental skills in becoming an adult and being ready for adulthood. Before they "get it" (delayed gratification) the payoff must be now. Basically, is it fun?!? They don't see that building up their strength, or dealing with adversity, or working on their weakness, will make them better in the future. That going out and hitting 50 serves in the evening will help their serve in the next match. This is something a 16-year-old does, not a 13-year-old. They just don't get it, whether it is homework or tennis. Study now, do better on the test or in the match. Makes no sense to this age. Middle school is all about turning in your homework, learning study habits, etc. Trying to force this understanding. If you have a middle schooler, you know this brutal. And then one day, they get it. "What's the problem?" as you lay broken on the sidelines. "Oh, nothing dear."

Key Point #10: You can't fake this. Or be forced into it. Some parents keep right on pushing and are strong enough to do so. Two of the top juniors to come out of Orinda area and go to D1 universities on tennis scholarships, quit almost as soon as they got out of the home and landed at the big U. All those years, all that training, all those matches, all that "success" lost because they never could say no, until they could. Andre Agassi in his wonderful autobiography *Open* said he was the weak one in his family; both his brother and sister told their dad where to get off. Andre made it to #1, got the girl, etc....but the price was heavy, and the costs high. Did it work out for Andre, perhaps, and maybe it made him the philosopher king of tennis. Then again, Stephie and Andre's kids play baseball and dance. No tennis anywhere in sight. There are tens of thousands of really great players as juniors, never play again. Never. And even if they keep playing so few are even good enough and stay with it enough to play on the team in college. Let alone play pro.

Teenagers, if you make it through into those pre-teenage years, you're adults now. Make sure you are playing tennis for yourself, not your parent, or some abstract idea, scholarship, or result, but because you love it. If you get off track, some can find their way back to tennis, when all seemed lost, and they wanted to quit.

So why tennis, or any other activity? The answer that got to me, was that tennis was a sport you could play for a lifetime. And it truly has been. But I had to get that, it wasn't my dad's idea, or forced on me, though he played with me every day.

Key Point #11: Keeping that fire going, keeping the kid wanting to play, keeping it fun (the definition of fun matures, just like the child - different definition at different ages), but Wayne Bryan describes several tricks to keeping the fire burning, without being a pushy parent. (Even if you are!!!!).

Side Door Motivation. This is one of my favorites from Wayne Bryan. Instead of telling the boys every day about how great tennis was, trying to keep them playing, he would take them to tennis events, like Davis Cup matches or college and pro matches, like Indian Wells, even high school matches, and let the boys just experience the energy. They grew up wanted to play Davis Cup for the US, and they did, many times.

Practice time: another favorite of mine. Stop practice before the kid wants to. Leave them hungry and wanting to come back. Don't push those last few minutes -- cut them off instead. "Sorry, we're out of time. Your [mom / dad] is expecting us. Maybe we can come back tomorrow. If you want to?" ;-)

They'll ask you to play the next time if it is their dream and their passion. Their fun. Don't let them leave the court exhausted and wanting to be anywhere else, like on their video games, with friends or on social media.

Lots of time kids feel too much pressure from their parents to win, if they get to the playing tournament and match stage. This can ruin the fun of competing and challenging yourself. It is hard enough to play for yourself, let alone everyone else. Imagine carrying your parents' dreams around the courts, as well as your own. Gets heavy out there.

The Question: One of my favorite tips on this subject is after a match in a tournament, win or lose, the only thing the parent (who paid for the lessons, gave up their weekend, drove to god only knows where, now has to drive back with an emotional kid – sometimes distraught kid, who may be a good player or even a pro in their own right, with years of competitive experience) is allowed to ask, is “Do you want McDonalds or Burger King today?” No post-match analysis, no postmortem, no nothing. I know, tough to pull off, but do you want your kids to keep playing? Have connection with you? Don't forget the “long game!” You're the parent, be the adult in the car. Tough when your kid played like an embarrassing idiot, “Did you see some of that shot selection!!!!” Calm down, parents!

Key Point # 12: Jim Loehr, the great tennis sports psychologist, put it this way: You are their parents, parents are for unconditional love and support. For being in your kids' corner. The coach's job is to push the kids, to get the most out of them, to demand more. This system only works if the parents aren't trying to coach, and if / when the coach pushes, the kids still have someone to support them no matter what. Many times, the parents push so much, the coach must be the support. This is better than nothing, no support, but not what the kids need. They need their parent's love, and it needs to be unconditional. Coaches can come and go. Then where is the support? And the coach needs to teach, to coach, to push, to drive them forward. Be the “bad cop” sometimes.

My dad was very wise, we both loved tennis, he was older (obviously – that's how it works) and better (for a while), but he never coached me in tennis. We played and practiced every single day in my teenage years, seven days a week, multiple hours, until I went to college, and we were close, because he was always my dad. Even when I was acting out, he was my dad. My dad got teenagers, and we had a great relationship through some of the toughest years. I never felt his support waver. He could have been a bit more verbal about it, but no one is perfect. :-)

Key Point #13: What about Video Games? Wayne never permitted them. But the twins were doing great, tennis, school, music, so they pushed hard, all their friends were playing video games, and then Wayne allowed it. Grades dropped, practice waned, and then Wayne did what any level-headed parent would do, the threw the video game console in the gully out behind their house. That was the end of that. The bigger point being, there are no absolute rules, try things, see what works, but always stand for the best long-term interests of your kids. He gave video games a shot, and when they came up short, he took his shot at putting a hole in the ground out back with them.

Key Point #14: Tennis is a pyramid. Lots of people at the bottom, very few at the top. If you are good enough to reach the 4.5 or 5.0 level, you discover that there just aren't that many people to play with anymore. “You're so good, no one plays with you anymore.” You left them all behind. It's a bit ironic that after all that work, no one is left to see.

Pepperdine Coach and sport psychologist Allen Fox once told the story of how in the world of combat fighter pilots, pretty much the most intense, cocky people on earth (think *Top Gun* / Tom Cruise here), 5% of the pilots shoot down 95% of the enemy's planes. Doesn't matter which country, same in even country's air force. So basically, 95% of the most competitive people in the world, are just up there to get shot down. To lose. To die. He suggested tennis wasn't much different. Bunch of fighter pilots, not very many aces. I used to look through sports almanacs as a kid, and you would look the Wimbledon winners, and it was often the same name for several years — king of the hill — then someone else came along and took over. Occasionally there were rivalries, and it went back and forth, but not often. Even the classics: Sampras won far more often than Andre. McEnroe won all the matches, then Lendl won all the matches. It wasn't back and forth. Federer didn't win that often, after Nadal and then Djokovic past him by. It's tough out there, but if you play because you love it, then you always win, no matter who the aces are out flying around. You can't be shot down. Occasionally there is a former great that is still out there on the tour playing. You tend to wonder, why are they still playing? I think of Venus, Jim Courier, Leyton Hewitt, Stan Wawrinka, Andy Murray are recent examples. Trying to reclaim past glory? Perhaps, or maybe they just love being out there. Hope it is the second.

Final Point: I never planned to be a tennis pro, and I did quit tennis in college. Burned out, the pain was more than the fun. Been there, done that. But somehow, by timing and good fortune, and my love of teaching, and learning, my curiosity about how things work, I came back to tennis, and tennis stuck. I can say the same about managing the Club. It's fun. I love it. Erik was an engineer for many years, and then came back, came back to the fun of it. The joy. Feel the joy. Lean into the joy.

So, I leave you with one more Wayne Bryan idea. If you are watching a tennis lesson, how can you tell if it is a good lesson, that the students are learning? The answer may surprise you, but the most important thing to ask and analyze about a lesson, is to not look at the students at all. Is the teacher is having fun?

Do they love what they are doing, right now? This is the key at all levels. Same if you are playing a match. Are you having fun? Is your kid having fun? Your partner? Because if they are not, that is the #1 issue to address, not their “crappie backhand”. If you lose that — lose joy and enjoyment — back off a bit, do whatever you can, to find that again. Take a deep breath, look up at the blue sky and clouds, smell the air, remember the moment, how lucky you are to being playing tennis. If you don't, it's a dead end.

So, like I said earlier, if you trained your kids or your students that the only thing that matters is winning, the only thing that is fun is winning, you've set up a lot of pain. There was a player who reached #3 in the world, and thought his career was a failure. He made it to the top 99.9999% of players. That's sad. Tragic really, and he didn't get there (to that hell) on his own, trust me.

Does using "having to win" as motivation work? To a certain degree, for a while, but it's a short cut, and you should only take a short cut if you have time to go back and do it over again right. It takes fifteen years (10,000 hours) to be a pro, if you are blessed (and almost everything goes right), no one has time to do that over. So having to win, living in fear and/or ambition -- no way that can top joy, bliss, rapture... not even close to a fair fight. Light over darkness ever time. Fuel the fun, fuel the love of the game. Enjoy the ride!

And so, we finish back at key point #1, it must be fun for the participant (in all the various ways individuals define what fun is to them at that stage in their lives).

And the parents too. **Find a way, find a way to joy.** Don't miss that one. You are funding the fun. And teaching / modeling the values. You've "gotta love it" too! For your kids, and for you. Same for coaches. Blessings.



Orindawoods Tennis Club – Summer 2024 Junior Tennis
650 Orindawoods Drive, Orinda, CA 94563

Summer 2024 junior tennis at Orindawoods Tennis Club (OTC) will operate from Monday, June 3, 2024, to Thursday, July 25, 2024, not including the week of July 4th. If you are interested in participating please contact Erik Oehlschlager via email at erik@orindawoodstennis.com. Groups are formed based on player levels and the following 2023/24 grade school designations:

- Transition Kindergarten through First Graders (TK – 1st) – younger or timid 1st graders
- First through Third Graders (1st - 3rd)
- Fourth and Fifth Graders (4th - 5th)
- Sixth through Tenth Graders (6th - 10th)

We use two player level categories for groupings: 1) developmental groups - those learning to develop service, groundstroke, and ball tracking skills that are necessary for playing points; and 2) playing groups - those that have demonstrated the ability to focus, play points using service, return-of-service, and groundstroke rallying skills. All Summer '24 sessions are open to both groups.

The Summer '24 costs and schedule of daily times for all groups are summarized below in Table 1. The Summer '24, Fall '24, Winter '24/'25, and Spring '25 schedule of dates are presented below in Table 2.

TABLE 1. SUMMER 2024 SESSIONS AND COSTS SCHEDULE

TIMES	GROUPS, COSTS, AND SESSIONS						
	6/3 - 6/6	6/10 - 6/13	6/17 - 6/20	6/24 - 6/27	7/8 - 7/11	7/15 - 7/18	7/22 - 7/25
1:00 - 4:00 PM	4TH - 10TH MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	4TH - 10TH MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	4TH - 10TH MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	4TH - 10TH MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	4TH - 10TH MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	4TH - 10TH MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	4TH - 10TH MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275
2:15 - 3:15 PM	1ST - 3RD MEMBERS \$100 NON-MEMBERS \$125	1ST - 3RD MEMBERS \$100 NON-MEMBERS \$125	1ST - 3RD MEMBERS \$100 NON-MEMBERS \$125	1ST - 3RD MEMBERS \$100 NON-MEMBERS \$125	1ST - 3RD MEMBERS \$100 NON-MEMBERS \$125	1ST - 3RD MEMBERS \$100 NON-MEMBERS \$125	1ST - 3RD MEMBERS \$100 NON-MEMBERS \$125
3:15 - 4:00 PM	TK - 1ST MEMBERS \$75 NON-MEMBERS \$95	TK - 1ST MEMBERS \$75 NON-MEMBERS \$95	TK - 1ST MEMBERS \$75 NON-MEMBERS \$95	TK - 1ST MEMBERS \$75 NON-MEMBERS \$95	TK - 1ST MEMBERS \$75 NON-MEMBERS \$95	TK - 1ST MEMBERS \$75 NON-MEMBERS \$95	TK - 1ST MEMBERS \$75 NON-MEMBERS \$95

TABLE 2. 2024/25 DATE SCHEDULE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
SUMMER 2024 DATES						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
FALL 2024 DATES						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
WINTER 2024/2025 DATES						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
SPRING 2025 DATES						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5