



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

Reindeer Games

Looking ahead, our Rain-o-Deer Holiday Tennis Social hosted by Lysbeth McNeill and Keith will be held on Sunday, 12/10 from 2-4 p.m. There is no charge for this event. Mark your calendars. You can register by contacting Keith (keith@orindawoodstennis.com) or Lysbeth.

Tennis Tip:

"Playing for Fun"

Often I hear members say, "Oh, I'm just playing for fun this morning." I know what that means, that they are not playing in a league, or a competitive match, or practicing for one. A match that "counts." But I have to say, that if we are not ALWAYS playing for fun, something is pretty seriously wrong. Call it semantics, but it's true.

As a tennis pro, and a competitive, serious player, I know I have fallen into the trap of making tennis too serious many times. And I also know, that "working hard" on something can be, in its own way, fun. It is the balance between effort and enjoyment, motivation and reward, that we must all strike, to make our time enjoyable, rewarding, fulfilling and fun.

Tennis doesn't have to be a laugh a minute to be fun, in fact it can be damn hard work, and very competitive, but it should still be fun. A good, difficult challenge can be one of the great rewards of life.

A wise person once said that the difference between work and play is choice. You may have to go to work, do things you don't enjoy doing, or do things you enjoy doing way too much, but when you are on "play time" you have a choice. You can stop at any time.

When we make plans to play with others, we often feel that we "have to" play, even if we don't feel like it that morning. There are always days like that. But if they happen too often, if the fun is gone, that is something to look at very closely. When I feel a bit like fun is missing from life, one of the things that I do is learn something new. Or try something new. Keep your tennis fresh!

Any serious player will tell you that there are stretches where their "tennis career" starts to feel just like that, a career, a job. Work and not play. No choice about playing. A requirement. I remember in high school and college, that after school, homework and training for tennis, there really wasn't any time left. And sometimes there wasn't time for school, homework or often enough sleep, and still be able to maintain and improve my tennis level. After years of that, very little social and down time, I must say, I got very tired of tennis. Did you know that most elite junior players don't play as adults? It's true. Check out the Quote of the Month.

The point is, whether club player, league player or elite player, we should find some way to "play for fun." All the time.

Tennis Tip:

I'm Late!!!!!!!!!!

How often do we feel late on our stroke? Most people would say often. In fact, timing the contact is potentially one of the big problems in tennis.

There are two ways that players generally look at timing. And which one you choose is going to radically effect the way you play, your sense of early and late, and your results.

Orindawoods Jr. Champs

The USPTA Junior Tournament was held the weekend of October 20-22. All the courts at the Club were used on Saturday and Sunday. Thanks for supporting Junior Tennis and the future of our game by lending your club to the cause for this one weekend. It is important to support the up and coming players of our fine game. Several of our juniors participated.

Weekly Lessons

Hit and Fit:

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

Friday 10:30-11:30 a.m. \$15
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 telling Keith you are attending (e-mail).

Pool Closing for the Season

The lovely Orindawoods Tennis Club pool will be closing at the end of October. Thanks for a wonderful pool season this year, and we will open again in early May.

Used Ball Drop

When you are done playing with your tennis balls, please donate them by dropping them in the Used Ball Drop just to the left of the Pro Shop door. The ball machine and juniors thank you.

Quote of the Month:

"Career suicide is not so bad when you consider the alternative, suicide by career. My doctor would tell you, I've served my interest very well."

– Jessica Chastain in / as Miss Sloane

Squaring to the Ball: Going forward vs. Going to the side

Squaring your racquet to the ball is how you meet the ball, and aim at the same time.

Model One / Play Forward is the collision model. Two objects flying towards each other, and you try to time the positioning and movement of the racquet so that when it swings forward, you collide with the ball at the time when the racquet face is pointing towards where you want the ball to go. If you swing forward to square (fig. 1), you are often going to be late (or early). In fact, only at (A) are you right on time, (B) you are early (ball goes cross court). (C) you are late (ball goes inside out). (D) is on the frame, as is (E). Lots of miss hits are not coordination problems, but timing problems. And really early or late, and you miss completely (the racquet is not even on the line of the incoming ball). This is because the "forward" swing is actually an arc around your body. Racquet back, follow through, make contact somewhere in the middle. I sometimes call this the prayer method (but how do I really feel?) You just swing and hope something good happens.

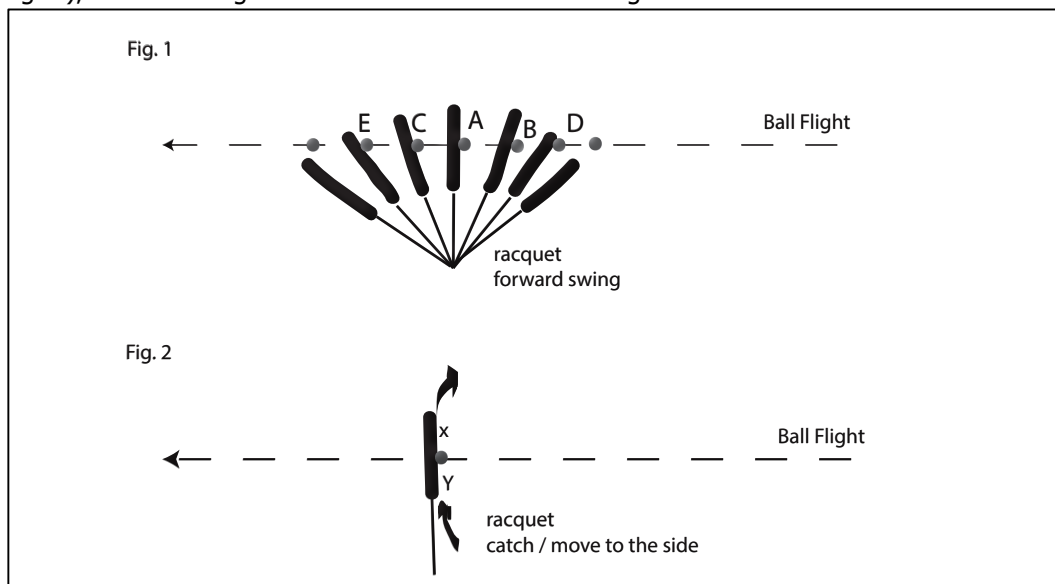
Even more trouble lies in the fact that if you think going forward is the solution, you will try even harder to go forwards when you are late, thus making you later and later (fig. 1). For example, if you are trying to contact the ball at A, but your racquet is late (say back by E) and the ball is already at A, going forward, while the ball continues to come towards you means contact will be at C. You are late. You can't make up for time that is already lost. Stepping forward ("step into the ball") makes this situation even worse, by moving the contact point further forward.

Just think of a batter in baseball. A big step forward just makes the pitch arrive faster by shortening the distance between the pitcher and the batter.

Model Two / Play to the Side is letting the ball come to you, or the catch model.

If you think of moving to the side to get in the way of the passing ball (fig. 2), you won't be late nearly as often. You are really just waiting for the ball to contact the strings before you really start to move. And when you are a bit early (y) or late (x), you are probably just on the top or bottom of the racquet, and thus still hitting towards the court. (the strings are still facing forward, not arcing around your body).

If your racquet is at E, and the ball is already at A, it would be better to keep the racquet at E, and turn it towards the court (as in fig. 2), rather than go forward and be late at C. Going forward makes it harder to time contact properly.



Models of Contact. And there is a second problem with swinging forward, and that has to do with the nature of contact. There are two basic models for making contact in tennis.

1) the ball is moving, move the racquet on a collision course in the opposite direction of the ball. This is the "hitting model."

2) The ball is moving, wait for the ball to "hit" the racquet. This is the "catching model", or basically what you do when you catch a ball.

Here's a big clue as to what you want to do: Just watch any baseball game. Catching is way easier than hitting. They catch all the time, hitting is, as they say, "hit and miss."

Plus hitting out at the ball is not required to return the ball over the net. Remember from "A Tennis Koan" (August 2017 newsletter, available on our website), bounce a ball up and down on your strings. It bounces up, whether you are moving the racquet in that direction (up and down), or sideways. So when we are playing, we don't need to go forward, to make contact, to make the ball change direction and go back over the net. The ball is unstable and quite bouncy, the racquet is a trampoline. If the ball collides with the stings, the ball is going to go forwards whether you are moving forward or not.

Now let's look at golf. In golf, you have a ball and a club. One is moving, one isn't. We need to make tennis more like golf, but in reverse. In tennis the ball is moving, and the racquet should be more still (especially in the depth dimension). The hitting or collision model is so tough when you look at the physics and geometry of what has to happen. In the news, we hear that it is very hard to knock a missile out of the sky with a missile of our own.



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It's difficult to have two moving objects and arrange a timely collision. But we mistakenly feel we need to "hit" the ball back over the net. What we need to do is return the ball back over the net. It would be better to "catch" the ball first, then send it back over the net, rather than swing out at the ball in desperation. What we need to learn is "to move, without moving." Use force without swinging. Fortunately, that is not as difficult or impossible, as it sounds.

Play to the Side. If instead of hitting, you moved primarily to the side and up, creating a wall for the ball to collide with, then you would have more of a catch and less of a collision. And if the "wall" gave, or absorbed the ball first, before reversing direction and driving the ball back over the net, it would be even better. Let's take a closer look at the most important moment in tennis: contact.

Phases of Contact: There are three phases of contact, 1) capturing the ball, 2) driving the ball, 3) following the ball. Or 1) catch, 2) apply force, 3) release (with spin and control).

If you hit the ball (Fig. 1, move forward into contact) there is very little capture (the ball does compress and push into the string bed a bit), the ball bounces away very quickly, so there is little dive (with the body), and very little follow. You are just blocking the ball, or swatting it. The ball doesn't stay connected with the racquet very long, it just bounces off the strings.

If on the other hand, you absorbed the ball first by using an indirect contact (going to the side and even backwards a bit, Fig. 2) then rounded the ball (see last month's newsletter) and then drive forward so that as the ball left the strings, you would follow it back out towards the target, you would get a longer capture, a longer drive/hold and a longer follow. The greater the length of contact with the ball, the more time you have to add control. It is easier for the strings to get a hold on the ball, dig into the felt, and impart spin on the ball. The ball is more stable when we spin it, as opposed to it careening away from a collision.

In conclusion, while going forward seems like a solution to being late, it actually makes things much worse. The farther forward your contact point is, the less time you have. If you already feel late, the worst thing you can do is give yourself even less time by going forward. You can't recapture time you have already lost. What you want to do is buy more time, by going back or to the side, grabbing the ball and hurling it back over the net with spin and control. Good luck!

FFT

Form, Footwork, Timing, the three components of playing the ball.

1) If you are going to capture, drive and follow the ball, you must move your racquet in a very deliberate, preplanned pattern. This is form, and it is essential to playing tennis successfully. The shape of your stroke, produces a contact that is favorable for playing the game. To deviate from that shape leads to lots of collisions and poor contacts.

2) To maintain form, and still have the ball contact the racquet, we are going to have to move ourselves around, so that the ball "hits" the stroke, rather than change the stroke to "hit" the ball. This is footwork, the second major component. A change to the stroke would compromise the quality of the connection (capture, drive, follow), so change your position instead. Move your feet!

3) So, once I use footwork to place my stroke in the path of the ball, then it becomes a question of timing. Timing the move to a) connect with the ball, and b) to apply the effect (speed, spin, placement, deception) I desire.

Playing tennis well is about 60% form, 35% footwork and about 5% timing. Beginners and intermediates must focus largely on form. More advanced players, footwork becomes more and more important. Elite players, who have great form

and footwork, separate from each other by timing.

If we look at junior tennis players, when they are young (elementary or middle school) the primary focus is on getting the form down. It takes years to develop a consistent stroke (for a high-level player). In the teenage years, the focus

shifts primarily to moving. They have the stokes, and they move their bodies so that the ball comes into the stroke without changing the basic shape or form of the stroke. If these young men and women go on to play elite tennis (college, pro, 5.0 and up), it becomes more and more about timing. The strokes and footwork is in place, and the separator between top players becomes more and more about timing. Of course, this path is true for all of us, it is just easier to see in the development of a young, serious player. And of course, every player is working on all three stages every time they stroke a ball, but the emphasis changes depending on their level of development.

A beginner can usually time the ball well enough to hit it over the fence in a couple of tries. It's the missing form and footwork that makes it hard to get the ball in the court. Form comes first, while our footwork and timing also improve in the background. Then footwork becomes the focus. Finally, timing. Good luck out there!

Junior Clinic Schedule Fall 2017 August 28th - December 15th

The 2017 Fall Junior Clinics began the week of **August 28th**, and will continue thru the week of **December 11th**. (extended due to fire). There are no classes the week of **November 20-24**. The 14-week program will be led by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson**. Some space is still available.

The Level I and II classes will be taught using aspects of the USTA 10 and Under Development Program. Looking ahead, for the **Winter** and **Spring sessions**, the schedule will be the same, but the pricing will change with the length of the classes.

<u>Level</u> <u>Days</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>	<u>One day/week</u>	<u>Two</u>
I	<u>Lil' Ones</u>	Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm	\$165*	\$270*
	<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	\$325*	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	\$325*	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	\$415*	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** should add \$25 (Lil' Ones, only \$15).

We have factored into the cost of the clinics, the potential of two weeks of missed classes due to rain, illness, vacations, etc.

Special Discount: 10% discount off the cost of second sibling. Discount taken off the lower of the two costs.

Inclement Weather: In case of questionable weather (rain), please call the Pro Shop for a court condition update or check orindawoodstennis.com and click on "live court conditions" at the top of the page.

Tennis shoes required (no black soled running shoes).

Cell phone use during class time is limited to emergencies or with consent of a coach.

For more information or to sign up, please check out the club website, call Keith or Patric at the Pro Shop, or you can also e-mail Patric at patric@orindawoodstennis.com.