



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

December 10th

Reindeer Games

The annual (ha ha) Rain-o-dear Games will be held (perhaps) on Sunday, December 10th. Each December we plan to get together and play some tennis, enjoy each other's company and spread some Holiday Cheer. Some years it even happens. We're hopeful this is one of those years.

So, on Sunday, December 10th from 2-4 p.m. we will have a social tennis party at the Club. There is no cost, and snacks and holiday treats will be served. Come out and join your fellow members for a big smile, a few hits and the season of joy.

We have been able to hold about half of these events, so we have a good chance, right? Grab your racquet, and leave your umbrella behind.

To register, just contact Keith (keith@orindawoodstennis.com) or Lysbeth McNeill. We'd love to see you on the 10th (in more ways than one).

LED Lights / Instructions

Our new LED courts lights were installed on November 10-11th. If you haven't checked out the difference, do so soon. They are amazing. And they only use 40% of the energy of a previous lighting. It's a win / win.

On / Off: One of the major changes in the court lights is that you can turn LED lights on and off, with a switch. They don't take a long time to cool off, or warm up. It is instant on, instant off. Therefore, the circuit will be active between 4:30-9:30 in the winter months, but you will have to turn the lights on. And, please turn them off when you are done. There will be a timer that will turn them off automatically after a set time (TBD). This timer will be installed in late November. Orindawoods strives to be more green. We save energy and money. "No players, no lights."

It's Dark: When the lights go OFF (or are OFF when you arrive at the Club), it is dark on the courts. The path to the courts is lighted, but please use caution when moving around in the dark. You might want to have a flashlight (phone probably) when you play at night, just in case.

Patric's Corner

Holiday Gifts / New Stringing Machine

Hello Tennis Fans,

The Pro Shop at Orindawoods is busy equipping for the upcoming holiday season. We have a full selection of **Babolat rackets**, including the super popular Pure Strike, the nationwide top seller, the Pure Aero and the New 2018 Pure Drive. While each of these rackets has been designed to excel in one of the three styles of play; control, spin or power, all three are remarkably well rounded performers. Come by and take one (or three) for a test drive. Any of these would make a great gift for the tennis player in your family. While supplies last, you will get a free Babolat Pop Wristband with the purchase of a 2018 Pure Drive racket. The Babolat Pop Wristband is a connect device that allows you to track your tennis game; forehands, backhands, power, spin, etc., through a free app on your smartphone.

Stringing. Need to give your game a little boost? Or perhaps you just can't recall in which decade you last had your racket restrung, then bring your racket by the Pro Shop for a restring on our new Gamma electric stringing machine. We pride ourselves on the quality of our racket

Club Policy Update

Health and Wellbeing of Members

When tennis staff observes a player with a physical or mental impairment that reasonably appears to put either the player or others at risk of injury during play staff will require that the player provide staff with a confidential doctor's notice that the player is safely capable of play before the player may continue to play on the Orindawoods courts. – Orindawoods Board

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

News Flash: Hit and Fit is now offered on rainy days. We will still do TRX in the Club Lobby for an hour. Friday at 10:30 a.m., Sat. at 8-9 a.m. \$15.

Tuesday Ladies' Clinic:

Tuesdays at 9:30	\$5
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Thursday Men's Clinic:

Thursdays at 9:30	\$5
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The men's and women's clinics are drop-in. Register for Hit and Fit by telling Keith you are attending (e-mail).

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!

Quotes of the Month:

"Don't let a win get to your head, or a loss get to your heart" -- unknown

"If you lose the spirit of repetition your practice will become quite difficult."

– Shunryu Suzuki

stringing here at Orindawoods, and we think the upgrade is only going to make our product even better.

Stocking Stuffer Alert! The Pro Shop can set you up with a new replacement grip, grip overwrap, or vibration dampener, giving you a new feel for your game, and they are guaranteed to hang nicely by the chimney. We also sell cans of the terrific Babolat Roland Garros tennis ball. Use them in your next doubles game or turn them into a holiday ornament, either way you're getting a great performer. Happy Holidays! – Patric

The Weather

It's coming. Fortunately, I have a crystal ball on my desk, so I can predict everything. Some even claim, I can control the weather. For example, notice how it won't rain during your weekly lesson time this winter. And when you ski with me, you will wake up in the morning to clear skies, and six to eight inches of fresh powder that fell overnight while you slept. However, if you don't quite believe in my powers, we have a couple of tools you can use. And a couple of further resource recommendations.

On **orindawoodstennis.com** we have a live court cam, actually two, where you can see pictures of the courts, and see if they are wet or dry. Just click on the "Live Tennis Camera" link at the very top of each page. Depending on your computer, you may need to refresh the page to get the latest picture (on a Mac, you push down the "option" key, bottom left on your keyboard, while you click refresh, the circular arrow in your browser address bar at the top). On that same Court Cam Page (just below the court pics), we also post our observations and best guesses (it's an art, not a science) as to the court conditions a couple of times a day. More often in questionable weather circumstances. There are also two links to Orindawoods' weather station. One is to our Weather Underground page, and the other is to the raw data from the weather station. On the Weather Underground page, there is a link "forecast for Orinda" where you can see Weather Underground's interpretation of the future (perhaps a bit better than my crystal ball).

Other Tools: Of course, you can do all this on your smart phone (or computer), including having the Weather Underground app. You can have it linked to "tennis courts", which is our weather station at the Club (just pick it from the available stations when you look up Orinda, CA weather). Other apps that are helpful (when my crystal ball is down) are Dark Sky, UV Lens (for summer sun exposure), AccuWeather, WeatherBug, and for radar: NOAA Radar and Hi-Def Radar. If you are a true junkie, the NOAA website is full of maps, and predictions, but a bit hard to navigate.

Final tip: Keep your racquet by the door, or in the car trunk. No matter what the forecast is, the weather is the weather, and it is constantly changing. The two words, weather prediction, really don't go well together. The nicest days in the winter are often after it has rained for a few days. Don't miss them by "getting used to" it being wet every day. It isn't true. In fact, in a "normal" winter (ha ha, whatever that is), I still usually teach about two-thirds of my lessons, so there is a lot of dry time out there to play and enjoy! You must stay ready. A good ready position.

Tennis Tip:

The 3.5 Sitter

Here it is, the big one: The 3.5 Sitter. The shot that separates the big boys and girls from the rest. We've all seen it, we've all hated and cursed it in our time. And if we are fortunate, we have mastered it, the dreaded 3.5 sitter.

But even after "mastering it", the 3.5 sitter still can make our knees shake, our racquet quiver, our heart skip a beat, and our breath stop momentarily... What am I talking about? I'm talking about the most feared shot in tennis.

Not the ball that rips by us, oh no, we can respect that ball. Skill was involved, we were out played, our opponent tattooed one. They are good, maybe even too good for us. There is respect, understanding. Knowledge of our predicament. No, it is the 3.5 sitter that brings most players to their knees groveling, begging for mercy. And, ultimately, to be put out of their misery. It is the Chinese water torture of tennis. The slow, inevitable death.

First, what is the 3.5 sitter? And how did it come to be called the 3.5 sitter? Well, the term 3.5 sitter was coined by member (and wit) Sally Johnson O'Neill, probably in a moment of honest frustration. However, generations of players have been dealing with the 3.5 sitter from the beginning of recorded time. To misquote the Bard, "A pile of poop by any other name, would still smell just as bad."

In fact, perhaps the most famous tennis coach in the world, Nick Bollettieri, developed much of his early reputation around drilling his players to deal with the dreaded 3.5 sitter.

So what is it? The 3.5 sitter is the blooper ball that floats over the net, with very little pace, and bounces just high enough that you feel like you should be able to crush it, or at least put it away. In tennis video games, you would call it a gimme, a sure thing, an easy win, all the hard work already having been done to force your "defeated" opponent in to throwing up such a piece of tennis s----. Push a button: winner! The golf equivalent is the two-foot putt. You should make it every time.

And here in lies one of the main problems with the 3.5 sitter, when you receive one. In the back of your mind (that deep, dark place that is frankly no friend of yours) we think, "I've got this point." Now I don't know about you, but in my lengthy and tortured tennis life, when I think I've got it made, that's about when trouble sets in. Nothing could be a more accurate and deadly precursor of disaster than this evil and insidious thought "I've got this" with the 3.5 sitter.

And why is it so brilliant to label it the 3.5 sitter? Quite simply, your average 3.5 can't handle putting it away, and either blasts it out, or pushes it back (i.e. returns this pitiful 3.5 sitter with another, it's evil twin, daring their opponent

to wind up and fluff the God-forsaken thing). A 4.0 has learned how to deal with this "shot," and usually dispatches it in an efficient manner. (but it still scares the hell out of them, and they manage to fluff one from time to time).

A Story. Once upon a time, there was a player who owned the 3.5 league. This person would push the ball over the net, and countless 3.5s, would either miss the shot, or doink it back. A match would disintegrate into a doink war. This person was the master, but the problem was, they were so dominate, so successful, so unnerving, they got bumped up to 4.0. Uh oh, the same style that was so successful in 3.5, was beaten down (but no one liked playing this player), and soon the player was harshly deposited back in 3.5, where they ruled the roost once again. True story.

In fact, 4.0 and higher players are often not the most powerful hitters, or the fastest, the youngest (always the best looking, however), they have just mastered the skills to answer a certain set of tennis questions. The 4.5 level asks different questions, as does 5.0 and above. Each level, you get a certain set of questions. To hang at that level, you must answer those questions, at least some of the time, but not yet be able to answer consistently the questions of the next level above.

What Makes the 3.5 Sitter So Interesting and Relevant? Most club players get to about 3.5, and no further. It's one of the questions stopping progress for a lot of us. Let's break through the glass ceiling!

There are other names (that can be printed) for the 3.5 sitter, or a playing style that involves using a lot of 3.5 sitters: Pushing, scum-sucking, bottom feeding, worse than lobbing, no pace princess, too weak to man up, or, in its most common form and occurrence, a dear-god-please-let-me-get-this-in-second-serve.

Being on the receiving end of a 3.5 sitter not only feels limiting and intimidating, but this shot has a way of painfully pointing out, for everyone to see, that you just don't quite have what it takes.

Ah yes, now you see, now you fear. The horror, the horror...

Heading South. We should be crushing this ball. We all know it. We can taste it. Just ask that little voice in the back of your head. "Hit the ball!!!! Hit the ball!!!!" And when you miss, that same "helpful" voice points out, "Hey [your name], you just don't have game, you're never going to make it. You poor sap. You poor excuse for a tennis player."

Who wants to go through that anguish?

How do you master the 3.5 sitter? Just like anything else, skill and practice. But few practice this shot, because most feel they should already have it down ("It's a gimme") and to miss is EMBARRASING, to say the least. Even in practice. We drill this shot a lot in **Hit and Fit** (trust me, there are a lot of misses, but people aren't afraid to try).

OK, the facts of life. Everyone misses "easy" shots. Get over it. Get your ego out of the process. The right shot, is the right shot, regardless of whether you make it or not. Start attacking this ball.

Another fact: when you receive this ball, the court is shorter. This is not a 78-foot shot (the full-length court is 78 feet long). You are probably hitting this ball with about 60-65 feet of length, sometimes less. Hmm... shorter court, power might not want to be the first tool you use. Fact #2, The ball is probably in front of you (not good, this is the best way to either hit the ball long or in the net). Fact #3, you actually don't want to hit it, as in, cause a big collision with the ball (see fact #1). Direct hits should only be attempted when you can hit the ball down into the court (short overhead, sitter volley close to the net), and while the 3.5 sitter is just sitting there, maybe even above shoulder height, it is still not going to work to hit it down. You are too far away from the net.

Words like crush, terminate, blast, obliterate, annihilate, destroy, vaporize, are not going to be helpful. Bummer. Try blasting a couple of times, and you will become that sniveling, wimpy player that just pushes the ball back, tail between your legs (and forever be doomed to play 3.5 or below).

Technique. Observe again where you are in the court. AND how you got there. As we noticed, the court (distance you can hit) is much shorter than if you were on the baseline. A full swing isn't going to work. Not only that, but if you got to that shorter position by running up, then you have a lot of force moving forward already. ("Danger, Will Robinson"). So first of all, no backswing. Yeah, you heard me: no backswing. Turning: good. Backswing: bad.

Second, you must get up next to the ball. If the ball is in front of you, you will either roll over it and hit it in the net, or swing forward and blast it long. Both are bad, embarrassing and reveal your lack of character, skill, worthiness and right to call yourself a real tennis player. And everyone will know it.

Therefore, we have a stroke with virtually no backswing, a good turn of the body, and footwork that has taken you up to the ball. Many of these 3.5 sitters are higher than your "normal" strike zone, and should be, so get your elbow up (good way to prevent back swing). Touch the ball and follow through. Think placement rather than pace. Remember point #1, the court is shorter. That not only means you can't hit the ball as far (negative aspect), but it also means that you are closer to your opponent (positive aspect for you, negative for them). A softer shot is still going to seem very hard, because distance between you and your opponent is short. The shot gets to them quickly.

Thus, revealed is one of the great misunderstandings about power in tennis. The weapon isn't really pace, it's time. Sure, if you hit it harder, they have less time. But let's not forget, that if I hit it with a smaller distance from you to your opponent, they have less time too (and might be safer to "take a little bit off").

In doubles, I aim virtually all 3.5 sitters down the middle, between the two players. In singles, I pick one side (away from them, or behind them if they move to cover the open court). And aim well in. Remember, on the 3.5 sitter you are usually moving forward and emotionally jacked to the 9s. Take it easy dude, be cool, make the [add your favorite explicative of choice here] shot. The 3.5 sitter is about you missing, or chickening out. Don't do either.

And speaking of moving forward, if it is obvious that you are going to receive a 3.5 sitter, why not take that big, fast, desperate running up out of an already very challenging physics equation: just stand in closer to begin with. This is especially true when receiving second serves. All second serves? No, but especially if they have double faulted a few times, or it is a big point. Say 4-5, 30-40. Wouldn't it be nice to win that point? Rather than gift it to them, or push it back and let them off the hook. Often, a second serve is the easiest shot you are going to get in the duration of a point. Don't waste it. Serena is the master here. No one gets away with a weak second to her.

Conclusion: The game of tennis is all here with the 3.5 sitter. There are two basic ways of playing. You try to force your opponent into errors, or you get the ball in, and hope they make errors. The person hitting the 3.5 sitter is hoping you fluff it. Not only because they win the point, but they get the double bonus of you going ballistic, hating yourself and losing your mind, after you miss "an easy shot." This is almost too good to be true, and the basis of any 3.5 and under match. Get your opponent to miss, and the easier shot they miss, the better.

The player who forces their opponents into errors, is a player who can play the 3.5 sitter, do something with it, and while not hit a winner every time, put their opponent under pressure so the returns get weaker and weaker. And they don't sweat when they occasionally miss. This is 4.0 and above tennis, or attacking tennis, roughly speaking.

I love to play "good players." I've often heard members comment that [insert name] was fun to play. They hit a good ball. Implied is that they 1) don't lob (make you back up, or reach up), and 2) they don't push (make you run forward). Most of us like to hit a ball where we don't have to move much. It comes to us. And especially, it comes to us in terms of depth. It is the Goldilocks ball: not too short, not too deep, not too slow, not too fast, not too high... just right.

The Goldilocks ball reaches our contact point without us having to do very much. We don't have to reach forward for it, or scramble back. We can take our perfect stroke. Of course, we don't want it to go by too fast, but we want it to come to us. We like to play with people that hit a nice, decent ball.

Guess what, 3.5 sitters are designed to exploit our deepest tennis longings and desires. The 3.5 sitter is all about making us reach and move. It is always a good idea to figure out what your opponent is trying to do, and don't do it. Don't be a schmuck and fall for that. You may have to move, but hopefully never reach.

I love the scene in the movie *Miss Sloane* where Jessica Chastain explains lobbying (competition):

"Lobbying is about foresight. It's about anticipating your opponent's moves, and devising counter measures. The winner plots one step ahead of the opposition, and plays a trump card, right after they play theirs. It's about making sure you surprise them, and they don't surprise you."

The 3.5 sitter, it's coming, respect it, be prepared, deal with it! Good luck out there!

Junior Clinic Schedule Winter 2018 January 9th – March 16th

The 2018 Winter Junior Clinics will begin the week of **January 9th** and will continue thru the week of **March 12th**. The 10-week program will be led by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson**.

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

<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 <i>The Lil' Ones class is for the always adorable 4-6 year olds</i>	\$140*	\$220*
II	<u>Future Stars Group</u>	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm <i>The Future Stars Group is for our 7 to 10 year old players.</i>	\$255*	N/A
III	<u>Tennis Development</u>	Thursdays 4-5:30pm <i>In the Tennis Development Group is for beginning through intermediate players ages 11 thru 14</i>	\$255*	N/A
IV	<u>Tournament Training</u>	Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm <i>The Tournament Training Group is an invitation only class</i>	\$325*	N/A

***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.