



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

Twilight Tennis

Twilight Tennis BBQ September 12th

Our third Twilight of the season will be September 12th. We will be serving Kinder's meats, as usual, with all the fixin's. Don't miss it!

The schedule: Tennis will be played from 4-6pm, followed by our traditional BBQ dinner on the deck at 6:30pm. (6:30-8:00pm).

For tennis, we do our mix and match social doubles, where Keith mixes the various players each round, so everyone gets a nice variety of partners. This is a great way to meet new tennis players and become part of the group. We usually play 3 rounds of tennis.

The cost is \$25 per person. Please bring your own beverage, all other food is provided. (Steak or chicken, salad, side, roll, dessert).

To register: please contact Keith (keith@orindawoods.tennis.com) and let him know: 1) if you are playing tennis, and 2) if you want steak or chicken. Hope to see you on the 12th!

Court One Rebuild & Pickleball

Court One is such a treasure, almost like your own private court, and maintaining it in top order is a Club priority.

We will be patching the cracks on Court One and resurfacing the week of **September 13-16th. Court One will be out of action for about 4 days,** maybe less. At the end of that time, we will have a new court. And not only that, but a court with pickleball!

For more on pickleball at Orindawoods:

Pickleball Court Rules

- Pickleball begins at Orindawoods when the pickleball courts are installed, not before. (September 17th)
- Pickleball is restricted to Court One only.
- Court One can still be reserved for tennis during pickleball hours. First come, first serve.
- Pickleball can be played after 12 noon (and not during events and clinics that take up most of the Club).
- Pickleball may be reserved on Court One between the hours of 9-12 a.m. if the court is empty, i.e. not reserved, 48 hours or less prior to the time of start of play.
- Club attire and court shoe rules still apply.
- Guest fees and rules apply, pay guest fees at the square payment station in the Club house. \$10.
- Court One is for tennis and pickleball only, not other activities (dog run, skateboarding, etc...just like all the other courts).
- When making a reservation, in the box that says asks for "singles" or "doubles," enter "pickleball." This will allow other people to come at that time to play pickleball as well, as there are four pickleball courts, and up to 16 people can play at a time. A pickleball party! ☺
- To reduce noise, pickleball players are asked to use Green Zone low noise paddles.
- When you are done, please roll the pickleball nets to the side, just like the ball machine on court 3.

2021 Club Rates

Keith & Patric tennis lessons:

½ hour private	\$45
1 hour private	\$80

Club Dues: \$140 / month

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

Weekly Lessons

Ladies clinic:	Tues 9:30
Men's clinics:	Thurs 9:30

Cost: \$10

Ball Machine

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

- Ball Machine Club runs thru 3/30/22
- Reserve Court 3 to use the machine.
- Reservations are for 1 hour.
- Pay using Pay Station / credit card
- iPhone app: Like My Drill

Racquet Services

Head Pro Patric Hermanson restrings racquets and is an official Babolat dealer to meet all your racquet needs.

COVID, Masks, etc...

Currently masks are REQUIRED INDOORS at OWTC.

Court Washing

In order to keep the Club clean and in the best condition possible, we will wash the courts two Fridays a month from 12-3pm. Check the Court Scheduler to see which courts on which Fridays. Thanks!

Quote of the Month:

*"It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key" – Winston Churchill.
(talking about the forehand????)*



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Monday Team Tennis Finale

We had yet another wild finish to the MTT season, with the champion decided for the second season in a row in literally the last game of over 1,700 played. Team 2 (captain John Bockman) edged out Team 1 (captain Cindy Barber) by one game. Not only that, but the adding up the game totals for the night, by our nervous captains, left the drama going for several minutes as the accuracy of each result was checked.

It's almost as if every point matters in this crazy game. A good lesson for us all, in any match. Don't toss a way a point / game you might want later.

Team	Captains	W	L	PCT	Ave	GB
Team 2	John / Becky	496	368	.574	41.3	0
Team 1	Cindy / Barbara	495	369	.573	41.3	1
Team 4	Chris / Rich	396	458	.464	33.0	100
Team 3	M'Liss / Tess	341	523	.395	28.4	155

As it turned out, everyone had a fun, thirteen-week season, and of course, the weather was always perfect (except for the first half of the season — oh well — a bit windy). Every Monday night, we enjoyed a lovely time on the deck, and a tasty diner. Teams 3 (M'Liss / Tess; captains) and 4 (Chris and Rich Overby, captains) hosted a party on the final night, including wonderful weather.

Thanks to all of the over 45 people that participated all summer long, and we look forward to MTT resuming next May, for another great season of "socially competitive" tennis (ha ha). And thanks to our captains! Well done everyone!

Parking at the Club:

Greystone Terrace Parking

When the Club is active, our overflow parking is on Greystone Terrace across the street. This has worked out very well in the past, but it is **VERY IMPORTANT that we only park on the north (right-hand side going up the hill) of the street.** If we park cars on both sides of the street, emergency vehicles will not be able to access the homes and areas above (in case of emergency or fire, endangering everyone -- not to mention your car, if the fire truck has to move it — literally shove it off the road).

Tennis Club Directory / Address Book

Online Version. We have updated the Tennis Directory online. On the website under "Membership Services" there is a page "[Tennis Directory](#)" that has a link to the tennis club address book. You need to sign-in to the Tennis Club website to look up this information.

Obviously, this information is for private use, by tennis partners, and not for any business or solicitation. That is why it is on the private, member-only, sign-in required, section of the website. Thank you.

The Easy Game

Playing to the Side

"The Ball goes back and forth, but the play is to the side." — Tom Stowe

If you read these articles you know that I often use this quote from Tom Stowe. It could be the key that unlocks tennis (see Churchill thoughts in Quotes of the Month). Tom was a famous teaching pro in Northern California. Many of great players and teachers that came out of NorCal from the 1930s through the 1970s took from Tom. He coached Don Budge, who won the grand slam in 1936, one of only a few people who have done so in the history of tennis (will Djokovic?). Many of my fellow pros, friends, opponents and mentors took from Tom.

I've looked at this statement in many ways over the years, from the obvious to the subtle, and how it affects what actions we take on the court. His words illustrate one of the fundamental problems in tennis. We want the ball to go forward. From our half of the court, to our opponent's half of the court. And then it often returns to us, coming from their half, to our half. Sometimes it comes fast, sometimes it goes slow, but it clearly goes back and forth, over the net, between the two sides of the court until someone misses or plays a winner. This is indisputable.

But this back-and-forth action of the ball in tennis can lead to some pretty erroneous conclusions, especially under pressure, of how that actually happens or how we might accomplish our part of that rally, our playing of the ball. And if those misunderstandings of the process don't lead to out-and-out errors, they contribute to mishits, errant shots, less successful play and inconsistent results.

Begin at the Beginning. If you stand in a ready position, your racquet out in front of you, the tip basically pointing towards your opponent's side and somewhat up, your feet pointed forward as well, on your toes, arms up, slightly bent at the waist, eyes forward, watching the opponents play the ball. You feel ready for anything. Ready to take on the world. But if we look at this a bit closer, there is an inherent problem that has to be solved before we can successfully play that ball that is about to come towards us. The tip of our racquet is pointed up and towards our opponents, but if we look at the stings, and the string bed, one side is pointed to the left fence, and the other to the right fence. Hardly where we want the ball to go. Neither side of the racquet face is pointed back over the net, towards our opponent's side. In fact, they are roughly 90 degrees or so out of alignment with our target. Only the edge of your racquet frame points forward. Not really the surface you want to play the ball with, even if you have a "wide body" racquet frame.

When our opponent does play the ball towards us, we do have to turn or move the racquet so that one side of the racquet string bed is pointing forwards (over the net), and the tip of the racquet now has to be pointing towards the side fence. This is best accomplished by turning our body 90 degrees, rather than just moving our arm. How we do that is a technical footwork discussion for another article.

We can already see, that as the ball goes back and forth between opponents, the players have to face to the side, or point the tip of the racquet to the side, just to get the stings pointing forwards towards the other side of the court. Thus, "the play is to the side."

So far, so good. But what about moving the racquet, sending the ball back, stroking? In other words, power. This is where tennis gets pretty darn tricky.

Movement / Energy. We want the ball to go forward, after all, so logic seems to dictate that the racquet should be moving forward ("Danger, Will Robinson!"). The problem is twofold:

- 1) When you move the racquet backwards and forwards any distance at all, the face, the string bed, doesn't stay pointing forwards (unless you push). On a right-hander's forehand, when you take it back, the strings point to the right, not forward, and when you bring it forward, there is a brief moment when the strings point towards the opponent's half, and then the racquet strings point to the left. Your timing would have to be perfect to play this way with any accuracy. The racquet is only pointing towards your target for an extremely brief time. There would be a lot of variances in side-to-side placement of your shots. Of course, you could increase the length of this moment the racquet is pointing forward by going slower, but then you are losing power.
- 2) The second problem is that when we are moving forward, with the bouncy ball being struck by a bouncy racquet (trampoline), we get a lot of bounce, and that makes it very hard to control the ball. Again, we can move slowly to reduce the bounce, but then again, what of power? We want power and control, not power or control.

To keep the ball in play, we would prefer to roll the ball, to put spin on it, which demands that we go across the ball, brush it, not hit through it. Tennis is not the popular arcade game, Whack a Mole. We brush the ball, not hit it.

We can see the logic of going forward, a method widely used in tennis at the club, park and league level, has some real problems and limitations. You can't go very fast, add much spin and maintain accuracy and control.

That brings us to catching. What is the nature catching? What is the nature hitting? Catching is letting the ball come to you. Hitting is moving your racquet towards the ball. Anyone who has played baseball or softball knows, catching is way easier than hitting. And yet we need to send the ball back to our opponent's side of the net. How do we use the advantages of a catching motion, and still send the ball over the net?

As mentioned above, we must remember that the ball is very bouncy, as is the racquet. And the ball comes to us with some pace. Sometimes a great deal of pace. So, a lot of the power is already present. A ball just hitting a racquet is going to bounce a long way. On a huge serve, the problem isn't as much hitting it (aces are rare), as hitting back too far. How much do we really need to add?

In a sense, the ball should primarily hit the stroke, not the stroke hit the ball. How does the stroke add / manage force, without losing control? We want to use the racquet to catch the ball. The truth is, the racquet is really lousy at actually catching the ball, the ball will bounce off the racquet, but we want to move the racquet like we are catching and rolling the ball off the strings for spin. Pretending we are catching actually produces the best possible contact.

Paradigm Shift. What is involved here is a different way to look at the problem of playing tennis. A Paradigm shift. At the root of this discussion is the fact that the primary problem in tennis for us players is not power, it is not sending the ball, in a sense, it is not making the ball go back and forth. The main problem is aiming and control. We need to be able to manage the power, the bounce, that is natural in tennis. Control it, harness it, and use it to our advantage.

As we have said, going across the back of the ball is what creates roll, or spin on the ball. So, we definitely want some rolling, or brushing of the ball. And, the racquet tip has to be pointing to the side, for the racquet face to pointing forward. And therefore, the ball needs to hit the racquet when the tip pointing and moving primarily to the side. And of power? The interesting thing is that all the energy that ends up on the ball is directed by which way the strings are pointing. So, if the racquet is moving out to the side and up, but the strings are pointing forward, the string bed will

primarily reflect the ball back forward, with much the energy you are putting into it, even if that energy is largely going up and to the side. This is a tough concept to get, to trust, to accept, but it is crucial to your success.

Width, The Lost Dimension. When I compare how a present day, elite player looks when they stroke a ball, to how a club player looks, a couple of things really jump out at me. The pro's strokes have a lot more curves and a club player's are much more linear, straight ahead.

It could be argued that this makes sense, as a linear stroke is much easier to do, and we should leave all those curves to the highly talented. Makes sense, and an argument that has often carried the day in many player's minds. (And a lot of teaching pros too) But what if, it was the strokes themselves, that were largely responsible for the elite players being "so highly talented, so elite." In other words, it's not their athleticism, it's their style.

As I have often quoted Doug King, "There is an easy way to learn, that is difficult to play. And there is a hard way to learn, that is easy to play." Or as Einstein said, "you want things to be simple, but not too simple." Be wary of the logic that because something is simpler to do, it is better. Or that the better way takes "too long to master."

Maybe all those curves we see in elite player's strokes, while a bit tougher to initially line the racquet and the ball up, actually make playing tennis easier? A whole lot easier. Game-changing easier. So much easier that no elite player plays with the linear style. Not one. With this style you get power and control, and not one or the other.

We are playing in a tennis world that has two very different ways of playing, and it absolutely divides this world into two camps. Two completely different paradigms that lead to completely different methods, and different results.

What is different in an elite player's strokes? The simplest answer, the most visual answer, is there are more curves, more turns, which actually leads to the subtler answer: there is more **width** in the elite player's stroke. These curves mean the racquet approaches the ball at an angle, rather than directly towards it, and the resulting contact has a large element of rolling the ball, and throwing the ball (slinging it), as opposed to a direct striking of the ball. In other words, the elite player is playing a style that is designed for three dimensions (four if you count time), not two. We live in a three-dimensional world, after all. Plus, time. Unfortunately, we are drawn to simpler, two-dimensional answers.

Elite players realize that tennis much more than a collision of two moving objects. The goal is not to merely contact the ball, but to play it up over the net, into the court, to a certain place, with a certain speed and spin. And not only that, but they would like to disguise their intention prior to contact.

Back on the court. What does this look like? On a volley, the primary move is from outside the ball to inside. This is the underspin or slice move (this is the "catch" part of the stroke in the diagram). On a topspin groundstroke, the primary move is from low inside the ball to high outside the ball (this is the "drive" part of the stroke on the Figure 8, inside the box). We accomplish this by primarily rotating our shoulders, so the tip of the racquet goes from pointing inside and down, to up and out to the side, rolling up and around the ball. Playing to the side, across the flight path of the ball. Instead of going forward, we are waiting for the ball to come to the contact point, to the racquet, to the side, (this has many of the elements of catching) and then rolling the ball, using a propeller motion (Feb. 2021 newsletter).

Bottom Line: Elite players play primarily to the side, primarily in the width dimension. If we track how the tip or the racquet moves in the drive phase of the stroke, as the arm rotates, it moves about 5 feet out to the side in width, while rotating about 4-5 feet up in height (but only about 2-3 feet up prior to contact, the rest of the height is after contact), while going forward about 2 feet in depth. Yes, there is forward movement, but it is secondary to the width, and height (because the objective is to aim, to control the ball with spin, to contact it in first, then add pace). In distance, the racquet moves in a ratio of 5:3:2 (width: height: depth) in this crucial "drive" part of the stroke. Or much more "out" and "up", than forward. Remember, in tennis we can only play the ball as hard as we can get it in.

Jack Broudy, the San Diego teaching pro legend, has done great work on this width element, pointing out that the racquet tip moves in almost a perfect figure 8, out on a 45-degree angle to contact (see diagram / napkin drawing ©).

Is it harder to play to the side? Actually, it is much easier. Catching is easier than hitting, aiming easier than hitting.

And surprising to say, but power comes from going to the side as well (b/c useful power comes from alignment). We get a better contact with the ball (in the sweet spot, aiming, and the sideways energy is transferred to forward force by the stings).

What is hard is changing our old thinking about going forward and sending. We grab a stick and want to strike things. Whack a Mole. We just want to hit things. Those are strong habits, hard to break free of.

In the Valley of Elah, 3,000 years ago, a young man named David beat a much larger, fully grown giant of a man, Goliath, using a sling motion (curves, turns, width, throwing), as opposed to a club (straight ahead hitting). It was true then, and it's still true today. What looked like an upset, was just better physics and a better way to play. In other words, an easy game.

