



# Orindawoods Tennis News

September 2022 Vol: 28, Issue 9

Orindawoods Tennis Club: 925-254-1065; [www.orindawoodstennis.com](http://www.orindawoodstennis.com)

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

## Thank You for a Wonderful Summer

I want to thank everyone for a wonderful summer here at Orindawoods. Despite not having a Head Pro for almost 3 months, and being on my own, the Club was a great place to be this summer. The junior program marched on (thank you Michael, Emma and the junior staff), as did MTT and all our social programs, many lessons were taught, and we maintained our normal social and league programming. The pool was refreshing and well-maintained by our new pool contractor, Picture Perfect Pools (so pleased).

I really appreciate the way everyone was supportive as the Club not only remained fully functioning, but keep the fun going, the tennis active, the juniors and adults learning, and even adding some great pickleball action. I have to say that personally, it was exhausting, but I'm so glad, proud and happy at the way the Club came through this transition period.

In September, I will be able to take a couple of tennis related trips (not exactly vacations, but close) to recharge the batteries, acquire new information, knowledge, and wisdom to bring back to the Club for an exciting Fall. It's great to have Erik on board going forward!

### Twilight Tennis

#### September 11th, 4-8 p.m

Twilights are a great way to spend a relaxing evening playing some fun, social tennis with some really nice people, eat some tasty food, and enjoy the Orindawoods lifestyle, and, "living the dream."

**Format:** We will play tennis from 4-6 p.m., mixing and matching partners so we get to play with a nice variety of people. Then dinner follows on the deck from 6:15-8 p.m. As always, we will feature Kinder's meets (chicken or steak) and all the fixin's. Please bring your own beverage as tastes vary.

**Sign-up:** The cost is \$25 per person. Please tell Keith: 1) if you are playing tennis (non-playing spouses and friends are welcome), and 2) if you want steak or chicken for the main course.

[keith@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:keith@orindawoodstennis.com).

We have one more Twilight Tennis party, on October 2.

### Getting To Know Erik

Head Pro Erik Oehlschlager started on August 23rd. If you haven't had a chance to meet Erik yet, say "hi" next time you are at the Club. Erik is available for teaching lessons Monday through Saturday and will be teaching some lessons in the evening hours for those that are interested.

Erik's first task was to get the junior program rolling. And, the junior program is off to an exciting and booming start, with over 60 juniors participating this fall. Erik is supported by staff members Michael McCollom, Griffin Ting, Evren Basegmez, Spencer Tantameng, and Emma Hermanson (before she leaves for UC Irvine – good luck Emma!).

It's exciting to have Erik here to partner with me in continuing to bring you a wonderful club experience. Working with Erik, we will bring you an opportunity to grow, learn and enjoy your tennis and club experience. Hopefully between the two of us, we can find a situation that helps you get the most fun and

### 2022 Club Rates

#### Tennis Lessons with Keith & Erik:

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 \$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

#### Ball Machine

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

- Ball Machine Club runs thru 3/30/23
- 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

##### by Patric Hermanson.

Patric is continuing in his fine tradition of being an expert racquet stringer. Patric picks up and drops off racquets on Tuesdays and Fridays. Put some zip back your game, get a resting!

#### Pickleball Playdays

We play Pickleball on Thursdays at 5:30 on court one. Let Keith or John Bockman know if you are interested in joining.

#### Greystone Parking

The Club's overflow parking is on Greystone Terrace, across the street. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that we park on just one side (right side going up) and do not block the emergency vehicles. Thx!

#### Quote of the Month:

"The secret to living well is: eat half,  
walk double, laugh triple,  
and love without measure."  
— Tibetan proverb

enjoyment out of being members and tennis players. One of us is available for lessons every day of the week. We have different styles, which is good, and hopefully we can find the methods that help bring the best out of your game.



## Orindawoods Tennis Club

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### Tennis Club Directory Online Version

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 access this information.

### Silvercreek HOA Management

Accounting and billing questions, contact:  
916-877-7793 or  
[accounting@sc-manage.com](mailto:accounting@sc-manage.com)

## USTA Survey

USTA NorCal is conducting a survey, or census, about tennis, tennis behaviors and tennis needs in the NorCal tennis community. Led by the incoming president, Pam Sloan, this is a worthy attempt to try to serve the needs of the tennis community better. We would really appreciate if you would take the time to answer the questions (about 10 minutes) so that we can get a better idea how to serve all tennis members. Go to [ustanorcal.info/census](http://ustanorcal.info/census) to get more information and take the survey.

**Right now, at Orindawoods,** I figure that about 10% of our members participate in USTA programs. USTA is very good at presenting playing opportunities for the competitive player, with leagues of all sorts, tournaments of all levels, putting on the US Open for our viewing entertainment (wow, what a show! - see below), etc... but for many of us, who just to love to play and hit a few balls, we wouldn't even know if USTA even existed. As a USTA NorCal board member, former outsider, and a bit of a former naysayer, I'd like to see if USTA can better serve the "average" player. Perhaps it is as simple as not getting in the way of our weekly game (at Orindawoods we do our best not to schedule league matches during prime-time hours), but I would like Orindawoods members to put in their input and be heard about what they think is best for tennis.

**What's Stopping Us?** It is often said that USTA play is too intense and competitive, and I think that is a shame, both 1) perhaps because it is true, and 2) the missed realization by many involved that this really is just recreational tennis and it is for fun, and a chance to play with a lot of other players from other clubs. Whether it is the matches themselves, or the recruiting of teams, the feeling in the leagues is exclusive, not inclusive, divisive and not inviting. League and tournament play should still be seen as a "social" event, and not a fight to the death. It would be great if more people could be involved.

**Take the survey, visit:** [ustanorcal.info/census](http://ustanorcal.info/census)

## Pickleball, Tennis and Court One

It turns out everyone loves Court One. That's great news! (When I first came to Orindawoods, Court One was used about an hour a week, on Thursday mornings a group of ladies would play). Court One is not only a great "private" tennis court, but our OW Pickleball Center. The challenges are around scheduling. We don't want a turf war, but sometimes I have to ask, do we have one?

I have heard, "I can't get on pickleball because people are playing tennis on Court One [when other courts are open to play tennis]."

We don't want to dedicate the court to just pickleball, because many tennis players love Court One too, and at busy times, we need Court One for tennis (in the morning, during the junior clinics), as all the other courts are full. To have a court sit empty waiting for pickleball players makes no sense. Same would make sense for other subgroups of players, leaving a court open for: men, women, juniors, working people, seniors, league players, social players, etc...). We share.

**Rules:** Pickleball can be played after 12 noon on Court One. Court reservations can be made 169 hours in advance (one week and one hour). If you want to play next Tuesday at 5, you can start reserving this Tuesday at 4.

**What Can We Do?** We're all club members here and friends, and need to work together and support each other, treating each other the way we would want to be treated ourselves.

First of all, you can make reservations a week in advance. Part of the challenge is the culture of pickleball, which is very "drop-in" based, and not so much "plan ahead," like tennis is. Players don't seem to organize foursomes, like tennis players, but play at drop-in times.

Pickleball players have the same rights to make a reservation as tennis players (after 12 noon), but it takes planning ahead to do so, and that is not the current nature of the game of pickleball. So, tennis players have an advantage in making reservations. We have tried to establish times when we can hold pickleball drop-ins, but it is hard to find a time that works for everyone. Tennis players are not really able to drop-in as well, but they are “well-trained” to plan ahead. It’s more in the culture of the game.

**Thoughtful Solution:** Keeping all that in mind (we’re all friends here, different styles and cultures of planning), if tennis players are able to play on another court, it would be considerate to reserve a different court during those pickleball hours. (The same also applies to the Ball Machine court 3, the only place the ball machine can be used, so if you can use another court first, that would be great). However, we don’t want someone to not play tennis because they don’t want to reserve Court One (or Court Three). It is first come, first serve, but use some thoughtfulness in that process, and supportive of your friends and neighbors. If you are playing tennis on Court One and a pickleball player asks if you could move to an “open” tennis court, consider it, so that everyone can play. It would be very neighborly.

### Reservation Cancelations

If you do have a reservation and are not going to use it, please cancel your reservation. Please, please, please...

This is especially true for courts and times that are in high demand or have multiple uses (like Court One with pickleball and Court Three with the ball machine).

In general, there are too many reservations that are not being used and not being canceled. Please remember you may want a court someday, and one is open, but you don’t know it, because someone didn’t cancel.

Thank you!

## Keith At the US Open

ETD Keith Wheeler traveled to New York City and the US Open September 1 through 6. He is the NorCal Delegate for NorCal USTA and Keith represented NorCal at the semi-annual meetings, which take place during the first week of the US Open. The business meetings were held on Friday, 9/2 and Saturday morning, 9/3. With the official Semi-Annual Meeting of the voting membership on Monday, 9/5, where Keith cast NorCal’s vote.

Keith attended matches on Thursday, 9/1 through Monday, 9/5. Below is his journal / court-side notes about his experience and some impressions and lessons from watching the best players in the world.

Keith had the opportunity to visit with Orindawoods members Marty Auffhouser, and Ira & Suzi Ross, sit down and watch some match play together. Nice to see familiar faces so far away from home.

## Keith At the USPTA World Conference

The USPTA World Conference will be held in New Orleans September 19-23, and Keith is planning to attend, and take classes and workshops on an entire range of tennis, club business and management. A mentor of mine once said, “You’re either getting better or your getting worse, there is no standing still.” With that in mind, I’m always trying to improve my tennis and management knowledge, and share it with you all, and make Orindawoods even a better place to be, learn and enjoy.

### Tennis Tip:

## The Art of Social Tennis

Yes, there is an art to social tennis. It seems “not serious,” social tennis turns out to involve serious mental / emotional work in order to have a good time, and to feel fulfilling as a tennis experience and a nice way to spend some of your discretionary time. In other words, fun and enjoyment don’t come by dumb luck, at least not in social tennis.

**A Game?** First of all, while we are admittedly playing a game, and competing to win, this is not “no holds bared”, ruthless competition. The idea is that everyone is out there to have fun, and it is part of the responsibility of the group to support each member in making that happen as much as possible. Of course, not everyone can win, on the score board, but the idea is that everyone wins in terms of having fun.

And for those who just love to compete, this does not preclude social tennis, but you might have to make some adjustments to your “game plan.” Every player, no matter how good, likes to have fun.

**Adjustments:** Generally, you don’t just rip the ball right at someone in social tennis, unless you feel that they can handle it, and it is “understood” that is OK. And on the other side of that, you don’t brag about winning and beating a “better player” when they were holding back to make it more fun and essentially more competitive. It can be like a boxer who is “holding up” the other fighter to create an artificial result, like “throwing the fight,” or “making it close,” and not going “all out.”

It’s a tough balance to walk, for sure. And there are often players who play a bit harder than others, go for the win a bit more. And we won’t always get it right, but be humble, supportive and fun-loving, and you’ll find your way to a good time. Then there is another pitfall, perhaps one we wouldn’t expect at first glance:

**The hardest shot in tennis.** Well, I think most of us would feel that the ball that came fast, bounce high or skidded low, and just exploded by you is the toughest shot in tennis, the shot to be feared. But actually, if we look at the cold,

hard truth there are a couple of things that are “off” about this very natural belief. First of all, how often does that shot actually even come to you? Yeah, we all have memories of being “blown away,” but again, that is relatively rare. Those BIG shots require a lot of skill to keep in, and most people play it a lot safer than “going for it all the time,” let alone getting those shots in when they try. So, while everyone remembers the bullet ace, and it often makes the “highlight” reel, they are, while memorable, relatively rare.

What happens much more frequently, and especially in social tennis, where the levels of players can be quite mixed, is a very soft ball, that lands short and it just sits there, requiring that you need to move up to it in order to play it. This looks easy and is very difficult. To poke it back the way it came, is easy, but most of us think we should do something with this “weak shot”, and therein lies a huge problem with social tennis. We think, almost always, we should be doing more than we are, and we often compare it to the best tennis we ever played, and it always comes up short. I often call this shot the 3.5 sitter, which is basically a ball that lands right in the middle of the court and doesn’t have much on it. It is very safe, in that it won’t go out, and it is relatively safe in that even at the 3.5 level, which is pretty strong, most people don’t know what to do with it. Other than to push the same (autocorrect shame) shot back at them.

**Here is a tip within a tip:** in general, the easiest way to make a shot is to hit it back the way it came. Same direction, height, speed and spin. Each one of those that you change makes it harder, and I recommend only changing one at a time, if you are going to change anything. And obviously, if you are sure you can do it (“only hit shots you can make”).

Here you are playing social tennis, and someone hit a soft shot, in front of you that looks easy, and you feel like you should put away. The temptation is to hit it hard, but it is quite difficult to hit a slow shot fast (or a fast shot slow, for that matter). Perhaps it is bouncing up and down, with some height, and not coming forward very much, it has no spin and it is coming from the left, where your opponent is, and there is an opening between your opponents to the right. If you were going to hit your big forehand, to the right, with topspin and relatively flat trajectory, like you think you should be able to do with a “shot that week,” you are making four changes. Miss a few of those, or even just one embarrassing one, and you will think, “I’m the better player, and I’m losing to these [weak] players, and I don’t need this, even though my [spouse, partner, friend, etc..] says we should get out more and do some “fun” tennis together.”

**Strong Players in Social Tennis:** So, I think that a good player, who plays social tennis is brave, and highly skilled, and if they are having fun, very accomplished at knowing what they are capable of, and not getting caught up in the many “mind-fields” that are waiting to ruin their day. So, in this way, this player really is a good enough player to handle playing, with skill (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) to handle “the easiest tennis around,” because they know it isn’t, and they want to master it too (as well as playing the “tough” matches) and have fun anyway.

In other words, you don’t get a free pass on doing the work, just because you are a “strong” player, and the shots offered are “slow” and “easy”. And we all know that in our hearts, tough as that is. Good luck out there!

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## **Keith at the Open / Bonus Newsletter Material**

### **US Open Journal and Thoughts**

I was very lucky to go to the Semi-Annual USTA meeting and US Open this year as the Delegate for NorCal USTA. It was an honor to serve our local tennis community and see some great tennis. Here is a brief journal and impressions from the matches that I watched:

#### **Thursday 9/1**

##### **Serena and Venus Playing Doubles**

The first match I saw when I arrived on Thursday night was Serena and Venus playing doubles in front of a packed Ashe stadium. Nice to see doubles as the featured match, for once. It is such an entertaining form of tennis.

At a crucial point in the first set, Serena made three amazing volley saves. She didn’t get a lot of strings on one or two of them, but great saves. Sometimes individual talent rises above strategy, tactics and even good play. At the time, it looked like the other team was going to pull away, and these desperation volleys got Serena and Venus back in the match, all reflexes, none planned or strategy, and changed the mood. Life is often out of control and sometimes you just have to trust your game and see what happens.

And then, things can change quickly. Serena and Venus were up a mini-break late in the first set tie-breaker, and then, three errors from Venus in the tie breaker changed from being up a mini break, into a set loss. The sisters never really recovered from that and lost the match in two sets. Venus seems to show her age a bit more than Serena. Of course, she has “more age.”

I got to watch this match with Orindawoods member Marty Aufhauser, who was in town for the Open and was able to join me. We had a really great time “living the dream” at the US Open.

## Nadal Up Next

I've seen Nadal play a lot, as we all have, and I have never seen him play so poorly. It was getting late in the second set, Nadal, down and out in score, and playing poorly, 4-6, 2-4 and then Fognini missed just a couple of makable shots, Nadal found a bit of rhythm and the whole thing swung the other way.

It looked like Nadal was going to lose when I left (it was almost midnight after the long doubles match and almost two sets) and I get back to the hotel (40-minute bus ride), check the score on the US Open App, and Rafa is rolling to victory. He won 16 of the last 19 games. Nothing in the earlier action to indicate that was about to happen. Things can change quickly, and you are never out of the match, as long as points are being played. Remember that. Form can change in an instant. Keep making your shots.

## Friday 9/2

**Working the Room.** I was eating breakfast on Friday before our USTA meetings, kind of in the corner of the dining room, by myself, trying to wake up from the late-night tennis, and the USTA President Mike McNulty came to say hi. We chatted for a couple of minutes. It was a simple thing to do, but it meant the world to me. I'm on the Gang of 51 (the sectional leadership of USTA, executive directors, presidents and delegates), but clearly not the most important person in USTA. Anyway, it was a good lesson about the power of being friendly and thanking the people you know and who work for you. A lesson I won't forget, and it really just starts with being friendly, and sharing your joy.

### Serena v. Tomljanovic

After a day of USTA meetings on Friday, it was off to the BJK Tennis Center for Friday night and the Big Show.

I had tickets to the President's Suite that night as part of my USTA service. It's opulent, food fantastic, and you are court side. Of course, there are tennis celebrities, and I have to say, Stan Smith is still cool. I even had a brief conversation with him, discussing the first set, tactics, strategy and mental toughness, in the bathroom of all places. Highlight of the trip. Who would have thought. And Stan is still tall. Good to see him at the event.

And the seats were amazing, like watching court 2 from the OW deck, maybe even closer. Best in the house.

As for the match, Serena up 5-3 in the first set, loses 4 straight games, two of which were service breaks. Ended with a very nervy set point, and a Tomljanovic winner on the line. It was that close to going the other way. Playing in a pressure situation is so tough, on Ashe or on the OW courts on Sunday morning. The winner often can see the situation as an opportunity, and not an adversity. A neat trick to know how to pull off.

Second set, Serena was on fire, like it was 10-15 years ago, playing as well as ever, but then another nervy finish, having been up 5-2, back to 5-5, then a tiebreaker. Always tense. There was a long rally at 4-5 in the tie break, Williams hits a winner after good defending. Big return on set point by Williams to take the set. Again, the nerve of elite players and the ability to "play their game" in the big moments, is amazing and inspiring.

Third set, all about establishing momentum. Tomljanovic got annoyed with partisan crowd, who were cheering loudly for Serena even when Tomljanovic was ready to serve, but instead of getting rattled, it inspired her, she stayed tough, played the big points better. And looking back, you could say the points after she got annoyed mostly fell her way. One person overcoming the will of 30,000. Impressive, you have to say.

Great celebration of Serena at the end, interviewing the "loser" in front of the crowd, which is unusual. And Tomljanovic said all the right things as well, "I'm a huge Serena fan too." And the crowd was appreciative of the moment, even if the result didn't go the way everyone dreamed.

**No lines people.** OK, I have to say this is weird. It just looks wrong after watching thousands of matches. I'm sure the next thing is some way to pick up the balls that doesn't involve ball kids. Ball bot???

Line calling, it's all computer now, like it or not. But it does cut down on the arguing (there is virtually none because there is no appeal, the graphics are king). And no annoying overruling of the call by the chair (don't miss that).

Progress??? I'm sure Hawk-Eye is more accurate (there is still a margin for error in the process, shots within 3 millimeters / .14 inch are a bit of a guess truthfully, just like with your eye. Overall, 99.9% accurate), but it takes some of the human element out of it, and I'm not sure that is a good thing. And the faith we have psychologically placed in computer graphics, that they are always right, has some scary implications going forward on issues that are not as clear cut as where the ball landed. You can be 100% right and still get the situation totally wrong. Just my thoughts.

### Medvedev v. Wu

The second match of the evening, starting quite late after the three-hour Serena match. Another late night at Ashe. Kind of think that is the norm.

Just my first big impression, but Medvedev's backhand makes almost no sound, blending, turning the ball, very little "impact". Like a silencer, it is all turn. A catch and a throw, like lacrosse. A lovely shot.

Also refreshing, Medvedev plays very quickly, almost as fast as he can get the balls.

I marvel at the mentality of these top players. Medvedev puts his best serve out there, not knowing the result, some returned, some not, just plays the next one. It's all about the percentages and the faith that in the end, enough of his shots will work, to win. In a sport where the #1 player only wins about 54% of the points played in a year, it has to be that way. Easy to understand the logic of that approach at a distance, but that is so tough to do when you are holding

the racquet, to have that kind of faith. To keep going when it “doesn’t work,” so frequently, and everything is so uncertain. Uncertain outcomes is what leads to stress.

I marvel at Men’s tennis these days: the spin, speed, placement, variety of shot, agility.... The women seem to play harder, hit more direct, toe to toe, keep the opponent pinned to the back, the men move it around. I know, it’s a generalization, but it just feels that way.

Again, the lesson seems to be play your best shot. Sometimes they hit it back well, sometimes they don’t, just keep playing. The outcome, based on percentages, seems somehow irrelevant, or a distraction, in the process of playing. Good shot, bad shot??? Just play well. If you keep hitting good shots, the percentages will come through. It’s about excellence and hopefully success. Playing well is your best chance.

### **Saturday Day Matches. 9/3**

**Alcaraz**, what a talent. So athletic, comes in a lot, touch and power. He has every shot. Sometimes rushed it a bit, looks a bit inexperienced at times. And then amazing, the shot making, the variety, the creativity of thought. You can see why many think he will be the next #1 player. He kind of reminds me of watching Federer before his break out in the early 2000s, wondering “why this guy isn’t #1 in the world.” Time will tell, but I just loved watching him.

Saturday evening, we had a NorCal USTA dinner and party, so no matches for me that night, but a wonderful meal with my fellow board members and staff. It’s like a big tennis family.

### **Sunday 9/4**

#### **Casper Ruud v. Corentin Moutet**

Ruud: beautiful, fluid game. Great drop shots. He is player who stands very far back on the returns, like Nadal, can’t see them from the seats when they are on your side. Ruud won about 55% of the shorter points (0-4), that’s where the difference was. Longer points were more even, so a bit bigger game. Well over half the points were under 4 shots. It’s wise to construct your game around the first four shots (serve, return, serve +1, return +1), few points actually have rallies. Though those rallies are memorable and can swing momentum if you win / lose one.

#### **Coco Gauff v. Shuai Zhang**

Incredible, the match tempo, pace, intensity. Both playing fast and intense. Great shot making. Very high quality. So quick around the court. Hardly time to take a breath, they just went at it, first to last point, and so close, with Gauff winning two very close sets, 7-5, 7-5. Really impressive. I could always watch a match like that, no wasted time, no gamesmanship, just get the balls and off to the races. Not the “headline appeal” of many of the matches I saw, but probably my favorite to watch! No boredom tennis. Wow!

#### **Medvedev v. Kyrgios**

This match was so close, with little swings in momentum, and when you thought, it was starting to go one player’s way, the other would pull something out of the hat, and it would be back the other way. The first set tiebreaker was that way. Shots that barely caught the line, were decisive. Unpredictable shots and placements from crazy positions, and very unpredictable. One sequence of points: two drop shots and an off-speed approach shot. One dropshot down the line, one off the court and an easy approach for Medvedev to miss wide. Crazy stuff. Kyrgios wins the first set tie-break, barely 13-11, with at least two shots hitting the line, that if they had missed, Medvedev wins. It’s that close!

The technical shot making by these two is amazing. Medvedev seems like he has a silencer on the racquet, very little sound, very little collision. Kyrgios too, they seem to blend with the ball, rather than smack it. The serves are louder, more direct, at times, while the volleys and groundstrokes blended, smooth, almost quiet as they throw the ball, not hit it.

3rd set, Medvedev serving 1-2, 40 luv, couple of missed, couple of good Kyrgios shots and the whole momentum swings. Just lose a little bit of concentration, and it can cost you the set. The level of focus, plus the intensity and concentration are just amazing.

In the 4th set, Kyrgios up two sets to one, but finds himself in trouble again, down 30-40. Medvedev poised to get back in the match and then Kyrgios plays two aces, missed a first serve, but went big on second, for the hold. By this point, Kyrgios is just on fire, so much confidence. Going huge, no fear. Medvedev looking a bit frustrated, because Kyrgios seems to be beating the odds. Perhaps that is the old odds. Is there a new game? Are we watching its birth?

A couple points, everything swings. Requires such concentration, confidence. Such unpredictability. Something works one time and gets crushed the next. Keeping faith in your shots, your game must be so hard. This is why the match winner looks so happy. They know, there are no guarantees, no matter what your ranking or stature, your reputation or skill. It can always go right, and it can always go wrong, every time you play there is risk, so you put it on the line, and therefore there is great relief and gratitude when things go your way.

It was fun to watch the second, third and fourth sets of this match with OW members Ira and Suzy Ross. Don’t know how I found an empty seat next to them in a packed house, but there it was, and it was a great experience. I guess it was meant to be.

## Monday 9/5

### Petra Kvitova v. Jessica Pegula

Arthur Ashe stadium, the Match suspended at 1-1, 15-30 because of rain. Rain? There is a roof.

Apparently, the roof only works if it is closed (so it is only as good as the person operating it), but wet courts increase bar sales during rainouts? Devious USTA plot??? :-). By the way, the bar is called The Open Bar, and the drink of choice is a Gray Goose Honey Deuce Cocktail. (1 1/4 oz Grey Goose, cubed ice, topped with 3oz lemonade 1/2 oz Chambord, garnished with 3 honey dew melon balls). I did try one. Just one.

Reputation doesn't matter. You are only as good as your current form or performance. You don't own anything, especially your ranking. One would think Kvitova is the favorite, all she has accomplished (two Wimbledon titles), but currently Pegula #8 and Kvitova #21. Kvitova is tall, blond and left-handed, like our racquet stringer, Patric. She has that going for her.

Such a striking difference between the way many of the men and women play tactically. Women tend to be very direct, straight-ahead power, very vertical, back and forth, looks like full power all the time. Impressive power. Keep it in the middle, reduces the angles and the running. A lot of the men are cagier, spins, angles, placement, lots of touch shots, and incredible movement. I know it is a generalization but seems to be often true.

Coco plays more like a man's style, relying on her foot speed to run down shots and not feeling like she has to hammer it all the time or keep it in the middle. One the other hand, there are some men that are now blasting away all the time. (See Tiafoe, but with angles too). Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the players that move well play more angles, spins and vary depths. While players who don't want to move or cover the court as well play hard up the middle.

Of course, the serve is the opposite. Men often go big on the first serve. Very direct.

Kvitova basically blasts every return right back at the server's feet, tough shot to deal with. She is powerful, but too many mistakes. The first set example: more winners (8-2), many more errors (14-7). Pegula mostly defending, keeping the ball where it is hard to attack. Kvitova looks like the "better player" but isn't based on the results. The visuals and the scoreboard are very different in this one, as they often are. I know at the club I'll watch a few points, think someone is rolling, only to find out they lost. Pegula to the Quarterfinals.

### Nadal v. Francis Tiafoe

Tiafoe wins first set, big serves (138 mph) powerful shots. Power v. Consistency, can power overcome consistency over 5 sets, a tournament, a season, a career? The age-old battle, of breaking down consistency or consistency outlasting power. Styles of play. Both players with great shot making, waiting for an opening for a break. Very few break point opportunities in the first two sets. Like Nadal serving 4-6, 4-4, 40 luv, serves two double faults, with a winner for Tiafoe in between bringing the score to Deuce, but Nadal holds. Next game 4-5, Tiafoe barely double faults on 30-40 after playing an amazing 15-40 point. This is the only break of the second set. Margins so small.

Tiafoe gets one break point in third, 3-3, makes a great down the line backhand winner for 4-3.

Serving 5-4 for the set, Tiafoe starts with a double fault, but then a service winner. Rips a FH winner down the line. And another, even bigger. And an ace. 6-4. Tiafoe plays "go for it" v. Nadal, "percentages." Match stats show winners almost double unforced errors for both players early 4th set.

Rain coming, they close the roof. The lighting very different, even with a translucent roof. Closing the roof came during Tiafoe's serve, and was clearly a distraction, Tiafoe broken, so 3-1 for Nadal in 4th. His chance?

Nadal is very good at wrong footing a player, going behind a running player.

Tiafoe breaks back. Then Tiafoe serves, down 0-30. 15-40, 40-40, ace holds 3-3. Again, the margins seem so small, but more break opportunities in the fourth set than the first three. These few games decided the match. The pace and unpredictability seemed to rattle Nadal. At a key moment, Nadal plays a drop shot straight ahead, a no angle drop shot. This rarely works. Looked desperate, kind of a choke. Tiafoe gets it easy and drops back for a winner. Tiafoe breaks 4-3. At this point, the stats show the points are very short, power based:

143 pts: 3 shots or less

73 pts 4 shots or more.

Almost 2/3s of the points 3 shots or less. Longest rally was 11-12 shots, and rare.

Probably the way Tiafoe wanted to play, not Nadal. Tiafoe closes out the match. He kept the points short, even going big from tough spots when it looked like Nadal had the advantage. He made enough and clearly caught Nadal looking for more of a rally-type ball multiple times.

### Danielle Collins v. Sabalenka

This match hinged on a swing game. Collins came out, big hitting. Much like Tiafoe. Fired up, hitting huge forehands. Serve +1, return +1, crush the return, avoid the rally. The stats showed 35 to 9 three shots or less rally length to 4 shots or more at 5-2 in the first set. Collins won the first set.

3-3 in the second, very long Sabalenka service game, many ads. Holds after a couple of break points. The game lasted 15 minutes, at least, it seemed. After Sabalenka barely survived her service game, but won a huge moral victory,

she breaks Collins serve and plays out the set. Huge swing game. Sometimes games, or shots or points are symbolic, and seem to have more weight in the players mind than others. Perhaps not all points count the same.

Sabalenka pulled away in third set. Collins not making as many first-strike shots. Kind of a live by the sword, die by the sword situation. Sabalenka wins, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2. Won 9 of last 11 games. That 3-3 game swung it. Changed the momentum, the feel, each player's confidence and attitudes.

#### **Alcaraz v. Cilic**

Cilic is one of those annoying pre-serve ball bouncers. 11+ ball bounces before serving. Another 8-10 before the second serve. How refreshing players like Medvedev, Kyrgios are, who just take the balls and serve. Rhythm is important, and pre-serve rituals, but so is entertainment. Excessive ball bouncing is unwatchable.

Cilic holds and breaks to start the match, looks like he is in for a good night. Then Alcaraz wins 4 straight, two breaks. Amazing shot making. Alcaraz has all the shots, uses all the shots. One point, he makes two amazing saves, somehow getting lobs back to the baseline with great defense, then plays some neutral shots, then attacks with an approach and pulls off an amazing stretch volley to win the point.

I left after the first set (after 11 p.m.). Matches play so late, it is impossible to stay up and watch to the end. Ended up almost being the record for latest match, 2:30 am. 5 sets, wonder if anyone was still there? Alcaraz wins a close one.

#### **In Closing.**

I really enjoyed my long weekend at the US Open. Perhaps there is a change coming in the game. It seems to have become even bigger, with players like Kyrgios and Tiafoe going big, playing more aggressive shots from almost anywhere on the court. Like ping pong, the percentage play may become going for it, not keeping it in, for the elite player.

The Billie Jean King National Tennis Center is amazing. I spent most of my time in Ashe, but the other venues are quite good as well. Clean, well-kept, immaculate, despite 60,000 people there a day. Like Disneyland, but for tennis.

Twice I had the privilege of dinner in the president's suite, and watching court-side. A thank you for two years of service as NorCal's Delegate. A once in a lifetime opportunity, I think. It felt like a blessing, I enjoyed it and I am grateful. Quite a magical weekend of tennis.