



# 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*

## USPTA Junior Tournament

### **Orindawoods Junior Championships**

Orindawoods hosted our annual junior tournament (Oct 22-24) again this year, after being forced by COVID to take last year off. Almost 60 kids came out from all over Contra Costa County. It was awesome to see the play, and even though Sunday's matches were rained out, and we were forced to postpone the conclusion of the tournament to Saturday, 10/30, it was great to get the matches in.

Many of our Orindawoods Junior Program kids participated and accounted themselves well in the competition. Patton Bittner (B10s), Jack Whitaker (B12s), and Dilara Basegmez (G16s) from our program were all champions, with Greydon Ting (B14s) and Parker Grenby (G16s) being finalists and Summer Chang (G14) consolation winner.

These entry level tournaments, where many juniors get their first experience playing competitive tennis, are so important for the future and growth of tennis. Many thanks to the members of Orindawoods for giving up the courts for a few days and supporting junior tennis!

## Pickleball News:

### **Pickleball Playdays and Times.**

As you know, pickleball can be played on Court One after 12 noon. We are also hosting playdays where we can have drop-in pickleball play. Just show up, and there will be other pickleball enthusiasts to play with. Our Pickleball playdays are:

**Saturdays 12-2 p.m.**

**Sundays 12-2 p.m.**

**Wednesdays 12-2 p.m.**

We are planning to have at least one beginner court, and one more advanced court at each playday. With the return of longer days in the spring, there will be some later afternoon / evening playdays as well.

**Pickleball Equipment.** Newbies to pickleball can borrow equipment (in the shed) to play. And Patric has demo paddles if you want to try one out and purchase equipment in the Pro Shop.

### **Pickleball (and Tennis) Rules**

Pickleball is permitted (and encouraged) on Court One after 12 noon. Sign up for Court One as normal and put "pickleball" in the notes. Since up to four pickleball courts (16 people) can play at one time on Court One, we will designate the court for pickleball and others can play too. The rest of the pickleball rules, as well as the tennis rules, are listed under the "Information" menu on the website.

### **Pool Closed**

The Orindawoods Tennis Club Pool is closing for the season (last day is October 31st). Heating costs, and lack of use by members makes keeping the pool open in the winter months unfeasible. But we will be back, with more new pool furniture next season.

See you in May for the 2022 reopening!

### **Please Hang Up the Squeegees**

We have squeegees on most of the courts to help you move the occasional irritating puddle. Just a quick reminder that squeegees work a lot better if they are round, and they stay round by hanging

### **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 a Babolat dealer to meet all your racquet & paddle needs.

### **COVID, Masks, etc...**

Currently masks are REQUIRED INDOORS at OWTC.

### **Greystone Parking**

The Club's 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 right-hand side of the street going up the hill.** We must not block the emergency vehicles needing to access the homes and open space above by parking on both sides.

### **Quote of the Month:**

*"Human beings change themselves every six months, they have all new selves, and it's incredible so we are able to adapt very quickly and manipulate and change our minds very quickly as well."*

*--Mikel Arteta, Arsenal Football coach*

them up on the fence, and not letting them dry sitting on the ground (drying this way makes them flat). It's a little thing, but it makes a world of difference next time you or someone else needs to push some water around and move a pesky puddle. Thx!

## Orindawoods Tennis Club Junior Program

Our Fall Junior Program runs through mid-December. Our Winter Program will start up in mid-January. Registration begins in December. Check the Junior Page on the website for all the details and Junior Program news ([Junior page](#)).



### 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)

#### Tennis Tip

### Footwork: Moving Around the Court

So much of tennis is footwork. And even if you are not the fastest person on earth, or even in your foursome, it is still the hard work that makes the magic of tennis happen. And footwork represents much of the exercise that keeps us fit, healthy and feeling younger.

**Origins of Sports.** So many of the sports we play, and watch were essentially invented by PE teacher types as disguised running. Certainly, basketball and soccer are that way. You run around, but you don't realize it as much, because you are chasing a ball and trying to score or stop them from scoring. The same could be said for tennis. These "traditional" games all developed their modern form in the Victorian age as a way to be healthy. We're having fun and exercising too. Those tricky PE teachers. Still works today. Not all ideas have to be new or modern. There are oldies but goodies.

**Exercise.** Exercise is one of the key ingredients that makes tennis so beneficial for players, especially seniors. I've always marveled at how many senior players Orindawoods has, and how they all look younger and fitter than people of their same age in the general population. It may be tempting to do other activities that require less movement, or retire from tennis, but that very movement that can seem more challenging as we age, is one of the great benefits of continuing to play the game and keep us moving. Or even take it up for the first time. Moving around the court, plus the social interaction with others, has been proven to keep people "young," and increase longevity.

**Our Introduction to Footwork.** When we are starting to play tennis, at any age, we must start figuring out this whole footwork thing. At first, in lessons, they toss the ball right to us. That can be hard enough in itself, just learning the coordination (that's why we teach it that way). But as soon as we get some basic skills and start to play the game, or even rally, it becomes quite clear that the ball just doesn't come right to us. Not at all. How rude!

We are going to have to move. Not only that but move in a way that still allows us to do our stroke. That's why tennis can feel a bit like patting your head, chewing bubble gum, rubbing your tummy, and jumping up and down on alternating feet. A lot going on, seemingly all at once.

I remember as a junior tennis player, learning this footwork stuff, that there were two essential problems involved in footwork (even then I was a thoughtful, analytic guy – OK, a tennis nerd):

1. Getting to the ball before it bounced twice.
2. Getting to the ball in a way that allowed me to play my shot to my greatest advantage.

While these both involve moving, and getting to the ball, they are not the same. As a junior (seems a while ago now), I was very quick and could get to almost any ball. However, getting there in a way that allowed me to hit a strong shot (not just get it back), was much more challenging. Finding the essential elements in each of the two needs is what makes up the art of "footwork."

The quickest way to a point is a straight line, run straight towards it. Our feet move best, heel to toe, forward. But to play a ball well requires having it to the side. (See the article "Playing to the Side" in the [September newsletter](#)).

The common tennis instruction is that you must "turn." Face to the side or face the ball when it is to the side. Basically, adjust our orientation 90 degrees. That is when the strings of the racquet face forward, towards the other side of

the net, in the most advantageous position relative to our body, strength, movement.

**Steps.** It could take two to four steps to move directly to the ball and be able to strike it, but it may take two to four more steps to orient your body so you can play the ball to the side, and with the optimum effect. (And two to four more steps to recover and get ready to defend the next shot).

Since to play well, you must take more steps, abet often little steps, it takes more time to line the ball up well, than just get to it. So, preparation, timing, split step, and being able to move at the moment of recognition (when you can tell where their shot is going) are all important elements of footwork. Footwork is much more than just running around.

It has been said that 3.0 level players take an average of 4 steps between each of their shots in a rally. They hit the ball, they watch it go over the net, the other player returns the ball, and they take about 4 steps to get to it and hit it back. For more advanced players, 4.0-4.5, it's more like 8 steps and elite players (5.0+) 10-12 steps.

Those extra steps are the difference between getting to the ball, getting lined up well to play it, and recovering. Basically, the better you are, the more you must move. And the better exercise you get. That's why professional tennis players have such good-looking legs. There is another reason to get better, or to improve our footwork. ;-)

Now few of us might ever be 5.0 players, but there is no reason, short of physical limitations, that we can't take the number of steps they do, or close. And thus, be much better 3.0 or 4.0 players. You don't have to be the quickest player or the best player on the court to have good footwork and to greatly improve your game (and results).

**Aging.** Like almost all of us, I don't move as well as well as I used to. Sad but true. It is tempting to overreact to the sands of time and give up on moving. But every step we take makes us better, even if they are not as quick, as many, or as pain free as they used to be.

There was a 102-year-old woman who was asked what the secret to her longevity was, and she said, "Keep moving, no matter how much it hurts." There is a real lesson for tennis players, as well as health and exercise for seniors. (Senior tennis starts at 35 years old, by the way, in USTA tournaments, so most of us are "seniors").

One or two more steps each exchange can make so much difference, even if your opponent is much quicker than you. Your job is to bring your best game out. On your best moving day, you could win 6-2, but on your worst moving day, that score could be 2-6. Same opponent, everything else the same. That is the difference a few steps each ball exchange can make. And that is hundreds of steps in an hour – great exercise / awesome tennis!

It's not so much a question of giving up on distant balls we can no longer run down. The issue is more not taking the ideal number of steps it takes to make the shots we should make. It is this second group of shots that much more determines our fate on the court (both winning and exercise) than chasing down the relatively rare great shot by our opponent we can no longer get to.

**The Mental Side.** Being young or very fit doesn't mean you have good footwork. There is a mental element to it as well. Some people are very quick, and can run down any ball, but are lazy (unfocused) and don't set up the easy, average ball very well. It is much more dramatic to make the big run and steal a winner, but you will be much more of a winner moving better on the "simple" stuff. This is where focus, discipline and concentration really come into play. We're all capable of that. Or not. It is just so easy to settle for "good enough", just reaching for the ball rather than moving, which can leave you very short of your goals. A step or two short, over and over again.

Of course, there is this shadow side in each of us. "I don't want to move." "Do I have to move?" "I can reach it, why should I still move." "I'm tired." "I don't want to break a sweat." We are even genetically programmed to conserve energy because our ancestors didn't know when the next meal would come. That's a lot to overcome mentally.

To be successful at anything in life, you must look at your shadow side, listen to it, accept it, find out what it needs, and deal with it honestly and effectively, or it will always creep into what you are doing and sabotage your efforts.

For example, some people might achieve great things in life because they were told as kids that they were not good enough. They go to great efforts, to prove others wrong, that they are good enough. That can be a great plus, and motivation for a lot of hard work and success. But there is also a potential time-bomb installed there as well. If someone is trying to prove themselves, to others, or the world, that could create a lot of pressure in an important match or situation, that is not helpful, and could lead to choking and breakdowns. The match just means too much. "I must win", can motivate, but it can also destroy or sabotage our effort. So, it is important to look at our motivations, beliefs, goals, and reasons for playing and attempt, as best we can, to fine tune them in a way that is helpful.

In this case, "Why do I move?" is a question you want to answer in the best possible way. (Hint: "I love to move!")

**Dancing.** Just get your feet moving, and keep them moving, for your best tennis and health. Tennis is a dance, after all. Here we find one of the most helpful ways to look at movement in tennis. Maybe the pros are doing a jitter bug, and we are doing a waltz, a bit slower, but keep moving. Any dancing is good dancing. You can rest between "songs."

Another element of footwork is that how we get to the ball and move through and around our shot lends energy to the shot. Sometimes, most of the energy a shot needs. With this energy from our bodies available to us, we don't need to swing our arms nearly as much. Since the racquet must point towards the target for us to be successful, we want to move it in a way that optimizes aiming (less swinging). Good, efficient footwork really helps with managing our energy.

In fact, tennis is much more about catching and then throwing, than swinging and hitting. If you think of moving to catch the ball, plus position your body in the best way to send it back, this is a much better mental image than thinking

of standing there, swinging. The ball just doesn't come to us like baseball batting or sit there like golf. Those PE teachers wanted us to move, after all. The game is designed to make you move. And it does.

When we think of tennis, and playing, movement should always be part of that image in our heads, how we got to the ball to "rip that winner". We should be wary of any thoughts and ideas that take us away from movement. Even when you are tired during a long match, tell yourself, "I love to move."

**Singles.** As a tennis coach, who teaches both singles and doubles, I would have to say, that the most important characteristic to be a successful singles player, is a great singles player just loves to run. They love the feeling of their body moving, of chasing the ball, of gliding around the court, getting to anything, loving the challenge of running balls down. Their body just feels good moving, and they take pride in moving around. And they like being on their own, having to take on the whole challenge by themselves. Who is likely to win in a match between someone who loves to move, and someone who would rather not? Even when they are seniors, and don't move as well as they used to, they still love being out there, moving around.

One of the real mistakes in tennis training, especially for young people, is to train so hard that they get tired, and lose this love of moving. We must consciously protect our most important beliefs and attitudes, the ones that empower us to perform. For singles, it's the love of moving, of quickness, of dancing, of exercise.

**Doubles.** And what about doubles? Surprisingly, in good doubles, there might be more footwork than singles. You don't run as far, but there is a lot of positioning, preparation and adjusting during this very tactical game. Since the action happens quicker, the footwork required to get ready is even more important than singles. Doubles isn't half the work, and no exercise. When we walk on the court, make a deal with yourself that you are here to shake and bake.

**Footwork Specifics.** And what are the specifics of this footwork. What do these steps look like? What do these extra steps get me? It gets back to those two key elements of footwork we discussed at the beginning: 1) getting to the ball and 2) being lined up to stroke the ball. (To the side)

When we get ready to receive their hit, our feet are pointing towards our opponent on the other side of the net. By the time we play most balls, our feet need to be pointing to the side, towards where the ball is when we play it.

Of course, those moments (images) are frozen in time, frozen in our mind, but they are just snapshots in our mind of steps in a continuous dance. How we get from one to the other is footwork, playing the game.

Somewhere in the process of moving to the ball, we must switch out orientation from forward to the side. Most of the time, we turn first, then move to the ball. But sometimes, on very short balls, we need to run forward first to move quick enough to cover enough ground, then transition to the side on the last couple of steps. This takes practice.

Footwork and playing to the side. This allows us not only to play the ball but play it well.

**More Than Moving.** But footwork is not just "move your feet." That is an oversimplification of what we are trying to do. Each step should have a purpose. Don't just bounce around or take a bunch of steps that are not needed

"Move your feet" is too simple. Each step should be either: 1) getting ready, 2) moving to the ball, 3) adjusting to play to the side, or 4) recovering to get ready again. Be specific, instead of just moving our feet with no purpose in mind. Some movement probably is better than no movement, but the wrong movement can be counterproductive.

Take getting ready, for example. Getting ready, means being able to move towards the ball as soon as we see where it is going. Since the ball can go left, right, high, low, short, deep, there are really a lot of things we need to be ready to do. And we won't know in advance of them hitting the ball. So, we must be light on our feet, and getting into a stance at just the right time, that allows us to move in pretty much any direction. This split step, landing at the same time on both feet, as we call it, has very precise timing. We need to unweight, hop in the air, right before we can tell where our opponent's ball is going, so that as we land, we can turn and start to move right away. If instead, we are just "moving our feet", bouncing around from one foot to the other, we might be on the wrong foot to move the way that we want to move, need to recover, and rebalance, thus losing precious time in getting started. Time we don't have.

Another example, moving fast to a ball may take relatively larger steps to cover ground and get across the court, but when we get to the ball, and start to do our more fine-tuning steps, those need to be smaller, quicker, and much more precise to get the ball lined up just right. The sweet spot of our racquet is only about six inches across, if that. Which means that our foot work must be precise enough to get a ball to hit in that space, without adjusting our arms very much (chasing the ball), which will diminish our ability to aim. In other words, we must get our stroke in the right place so that we can play our best shot, not get in the general area, and just swat at wherever the ball is with our arms.

As stated above, this is one of the main reasons that better players take more steps. They are better players because they are lining the ball up better, and not using their arms to chase the ball. Do your footwork with your feet, and not your arms. So, more footwork, better footwork, makes your existing shots better. If you are a 3.5, and you add an adjustment step or two, that will make your shots more consistent, and stronger, and you will be a better 3.5, maybe even a 4.0, without changing anything else. Thus, good footwork is transformative.

**The Rewards.** There are much easier things to do than play tennis, or play tennis as well as you can, but few are as rewarding. Much of the value of an activity can be found in overcoming its challenges and adversity. Doing something not everyone can do – or is willing to do -- and doing it well. Some of that is moving, and proper footwork, when the average person would rather stand, or do as little as possible. Easy is not always better, more isn't always better either, but better is always better. Be better. Find the joy in moving out there!