



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

Sunday Social Tennis

Orindawoods 50th Anniversary Tennis Party

Did you know, that when Orindawoods was built 50 years ago, that the first thing they built, after they cut the roads and leveled the hill tops so houses could be built, was to take all that dirt, push it off the side of the hill, grade it, compact it, and build Orindawoods Tennis Club. One of the reason our courts are so good, is they are on compacted soil (except for court 1) and that stable engineering has lasted 50 years. So, from the very beginning of Orindawoods, people have been living the dream. How cool is that!

In honor of those 50 years, and all the members and homeowners who have played tennis here, including us, we are having a party to celebrate.

October 1st, we will play tennis from 4-6 p.m., followed by dinner on the deck starting at 6:15. Tennis players, and their non-playing tennis family and friends are invited. Come on down!

The cost is \$25, and contact Keith to sign up. Tell him if **1) you are playing tennis**, and **2) if you would like steak or chicken**. As always, we will be serving Kinder's meats: filet minion or chicken breasts. Veggie options are available if you want to go that way. Some opt for just tennis, or just dinner. Build your own party.

Bring your own beverage (BYOB), though for this one, with an Oktoberfest theme, we will provide some good German beer. Wearing lederhosen or a dirndl is optional.

Beverages on the Courts

Last month we had new surface installed on Courts 2&3. Three days later, someone took a mocha down on the court to enjoy their coffee. They carefully placed it in the trash can but didn't finish it. When the janitor picked up the trash to carry it off the court, the drink tipped over filling the bottom of the trash can. Well, it being an outdoor trashcan, it has holes in the bottom, so as the staff person walked across the brand-new, three-day-old courts, he left a trail of mocha dots all the way across the court. It's still there.

For me, as manager, it was a good little reminder (drove me bat-s-- crazy) that life happens, and no matter how hard you try, you don't have control over the actions of others, and thoughtless, irresponsible, or unintended actions. And it only takes one moment. There is a reason why we don't allow beverages on the courts other than water. No one goes on a court thinking; I think I'm going to spill my sports drink today. Everyone thinks that they can handle not spilling, and that the rule, while great for preventing people from spilling, since they won't spill, does not apply to them. And when someone does spill, people try to douse it with water and dilute it. And it does dilute it, but diluting it also makes the spot much larger, because it is still 20% Gatorade, and 80% water. It doesn't go to zero % surgery, sticky, court-staining, dirt-attracting "water." When we wash the courts, once a month, it mostly comes off. But a spot could remain for months before completely gone.

2023 Club Rates

Tennis Lessons with Keith & Erik:

½ hour private \$50
1 hour private \$85

Semi-pvt (2) \$55ea
Semi-pvt (3) \$37ea
Semi-pvt (4) \$28ea
45 min pvt \$65
1.5-hour pvt \$125

Non-members add \$5

Club Dues: \$147 / 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

Pickleball Payday

Tuesday 10:30-12 no cost

Ball Machine

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

- Ball Machine Club runs thru 3/30/24
- 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 our expert racquet stringer. Patric picks up and drops off racquets early on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Put some zip back your game, get a restring!

Quote of the Month:

"Reality is only a Rorschach ink-blot, you know" – Alan Watts

So please, I ask — knowing 99 people out of 100 will comply, and we will still have one spot — don't bring beverages other than water on the courts.

Reminds me of the 20 Question Rule. Once upon a time my ex-wife asked me if we could have a cat. I said no. 19 times I said no, on the 20th time, I was tired or something, I said yes. 19/20 in my favor (that's 95%), 1 cat in hers (100%). That's life, try and laugh if you can manage it. ;-) Good luck out there, ... and ya know, water only courtside.

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Limited Parking at the Club

Orindawoods Homeowner's Party Sunday 9/23

There is an Orindawoods Homeowner's Party at the Tennis Club on Sunday, September 23rd. The Club will still be open to all tennis members, as the party will primarily be in the parking lot and on the grass field, but parking will be limited, especially in the afternoon when the party is in full swing. So, if you are playing on Sunday, 9/23, and you can't find a place in the parking lot to park, you can park on Hawkridge Terrace (across the street), but please only park on the Northeast side (Walnut Creek side- going up the hill) so emergency vehicles can still have access to the houses above. You don't want your car plowed out of the way.

League Match Schedule and Times

Weekday Leagues: We have a few leagues this fall, with Senior BALL A3 playing Mondays and BALL A1 playing on Fridays. These matches, by league rules, must start at 10 a.m. That means if you play on Monday or Friday mornings at 9, you will need to start at 8:30 on league days to get 90 minutes in. I'm not happy about this, but league play does bring joy to a lot of our members, and if the rest of us can adjust by 30 minutes on courts 4-7, then everyone can get their tennis in. The leagues do not play every week, so check the court scheduler for when you must adjust. Thanks for your cooperation. Not ideal...but...

Weekend Matches: We have a Combo 8.5 team playing on some the weekends. Those matches start at 11 a.m., in most cases. Mostly Saturdays, some Sundays. About 5 home matches. Our USTA 40AW4.5 team goes to Nationals in October. Good luck!

Orindawoods Junior Championships

The Orindawoods Junior Championships will be held October 20-22. Registration will close on Monday, Oct. 16. This is part of the Contra Costa County Junior Circuit. That weekend all the courts at the Club will be used by the tournament from Friday afternoon through some time Sunday (depends on if we get any rain). More details in the October Newsletter.

Tennis Tip:

Tennis Court Etiquette

For the most part, tennis is a friendly game. In the Rules of Tennis, there is a section called The Code, which is the guidelines for playing unofficiated matches. Really, all tennis players should read this section of the rules. You don't have to memorize it like I practically did for the Referee test all those years ago but be familiar with it. It's amazing how many players compete and don't know the rules.

So many players don't understand how to deal with situations like being unsure if a ball is in our out (*give the benefit of doubt to your opponent* - this may come as a shock to some, all sarcasm intended). Or scoring mix ups: in this order: 1) recount all the points agreed, only replay disputed points; 2) play from a score mutually agreed by the players, 3) spin the racquet to decide. What if you discover a mistake in the score (it's 4-2, instead of 4-1), or the net is 4" too low, do you replay the match from the mistake? (*No, you correct the mistake, but all points played in good faith stand*).

In doubles, what about calling whether the serve is in our out? (*The receiver's partner should call the service line, and the receiver should call the center line and the sideline, though each can call whatever, on obvious shot i.e. one way out or way in, not barely touching the line, or just barely missing*).

What happens when a ball in play hits a ball sitting on the court (*it is considered part of the court, and in play - you must try to hit it back - rarely seen in my experience, but not impossible*).

What if your opponent's hat falls off, or a ball falls out of their pocket (*it's a hinderance, if you call it right away - before you miss - it is your point - not after you make a mistake*).

What about foot faults, can the receiving team call them? (*Only after all reasonable efforts, such as warning the server and attempting to get an official to the court, have failed and the foot fault is so flagrant as to be clearly perceptible from the receiver's side*).

What about touching the net or reaching over to hit a ball before it crosses (*you can't, except if it bounce on your side first*). And a ball coming on from another court (*you can call a let if you call it right away, not after the point is over*). This is important stuff.

Beyond The Code, there are other “unofficial rules” for playing a match that are just common practice, and not in The Code or The Rules of Tennis. They fall under one of the general rules of civilized society and Orindawoods, stated in the positive: “Treat others the way you would want to be treated” or in the negative, “Don’t be a dick.”

How this plays out on the court? Here are a few examples. Between points, send the balls to the server in a friendly way, right to them, don’t just whack them down to the other end. If you are skilled, the ball should be lofted slowly, and bounce before it gets to the other player, rising from the bounce and starting to descend again, dropping right into the player’s hand. Ok, not everyone can do that, but do your best. Try to give them a catchable ball. Same with a ball that comes on from an adjacent court, try to return it to the person that is serving, if possible and not just knock it back anywhere. Even walking up to the fence or net and tossing it to the player is acceptable if you don’t feel accurate. Be good neighbors. On change overs, give the balls to the next server or their partner, or leave them by where the server is going to serve next.

Play to the pace of the server (in The Code), but the server should wait until the receiver is reasonably ready. Call out the score, or ask, if you’re not sure. Don’t let a few points go by, then question the score, and then you must reconstruct the whole game (see above, with no one really remembering). And on keeping score, use the courtside score boards, but only on the change overs (every two games) and so you play to the pace of the server.

Finally, for today, managing the balls. I think the serving team’s preference should go here. I like to have two balls as the server, and the other with or right in front (bottom of the net) of the server’s partner. That way, if there is a let, or a ball goes out of play (over the fence), play is not delayed by “chasing the ball.” If a first serve is missed, let it go by or knock it back in the bottom of the net, the receiver’s partner can pick it up if it rolls out into a dangerous spot and quickly put it in their pocket. Attempt to delay the server and their rhythm as little as possible. Servers, wait for the ball to be cleared. Quick serving the second serve is definitely uncool (and the receiver can hold up their hand and say they were not ready, within reason - can’t miss the shot and say they weren’t ready). If the receiver’s partner holds one ball, at least until they can get it to the serving team fine enough, but I don’t like to start the points without all the balls in control of the players. If a let is called, and the ball rolls off to the side, you shouldn’t have to go looking around for the third ball. Play should be continuous as well as courteous. If one ball does get lost, then it is even more important to pick up all the balls. Serving with one ball, and then having to run down another because you missed the first serve (I didn’t plan to miss), is really annoying and not good etiquette or good sportsmanship, for that matter.

A bit more advanced, you would like to have all three balls in play roughly an equal amount of the time, and not wearing out two, and one “new” one is sitting off against the fence in some corner, not getting used for a few games.

Ideally, we would all have ball kids to help us with that, but most of us are not playing at the US Open, ha ha.

US Open Thoughts & Musings

Last year when I got back from the Open, I shared a few thoughts and mini lessons with you’all inspired by the matches I watched. Here is the 2023 US Open version of that. My perspective and a few musings. Hope you enjoy!

Thursday 8/31 Night Session

Alcaraz, he’s pretty good. I wouldn’t say his match with Harris was his best tennis, but even when he wobbled a bit in the third set, and fell behind a break, he was able to right the ship, force the tiebreaker and win in three sets. And the “greatest drop shot artist in tennis,” doesn’t always hit great drop shots, Harris got to many, and did well, but those drop shots do make your opponent have to play the whole court, and not just camp in the back, way behind the baseline to neutralize your power. If a player must stand up a bit closer or be ready to go forward because you drop shot, it makes your power seem more powerful because they have less time. That drop shot, a very effective weapon, even on an off night.

It’s sort of like when we hit an alley shot or lob in club doubles, it doesn’t always work (win the point), but it can be a big part of winning the match. Again, forcing your opponent to modify their positioning in a way that helps you be successful. The drop shot is one of these tools in the singles game. It’s not as effective in doubles, as players tend to be in closer (thus the lob is a more effective change-up weapon in doubles). If you are tempted to dabble in the drop shot world, the most important thing is to get it over the net. Focusing too much on keeping it short, or barely over, leads to a lot of errors. Alcaraz seldom leaves them short, even if a few were too deep tonight. You are still making the opponent play the whole court. And that is really the goal, and how you win the war, not just the battle.

Pegula, she's pretty good too. Not the dominating, amazing, physical, mental, emotional athlete that Alcaraz is, but she powered through her match, and though the games seemed close, the match really never was. Such determination and grit, plus a surprising five aces in the first set. She only hit first serves in the 90s mph, but the placement was excellent, and some very good deception as well. A good lesson that you don't have to be a big, tall banger to have a very good serve.

There are four weapons in tennis: time (speed, plus how close you are), placement, spin, and deception. Don't always go for the most obvious, sometimes placement and deception in combination, are better than just blasting away. Hitting a "weaker" shot, a slower shot, give them more time, like a lob, often leads to "unforced" errors. 3.5 tennis is often dominated by "weak" shots in the middle of the court (you don't miss, and the average 3.5 doesn't have the advanced skills to finish that shot - so the match can descend into pushing the ball back and forth, no one missing, no one risking, for 3 hours or so). Finally, spin can really throw your opponent off, even when you hit right to them.

Friday 8/1 Day Session.

Outer courts, Court 17

Collins & Kichenok v. Maria & Rus

It's fun to get out of Ashe stadium and stroll around the outer courts, so many good matches, with great players, that are just not the famous ones. Early in the tournament, these are often the closer matches, and you can sit much closer too. The BJK Tennis Center has several great stadiums, Ashe, Armstrong, Grandstand, Court 17, plus several other great places to view matches, and the practice courts where you can see players warming up. Always interesting.

This was a great three set doubles match. Women Doubles is so fun to watch. Fast enough to be exciting, slow enough that it isn't just overpowering. There are rallies and net exchanges, but overwhelming power at times too. Maria, the best net player on the court, was made to look helpless and a victim by some of Collins' and Kichenok's powerful ground strokes, while at other times she dominated the middle of the net, knocking off volleys. Rus' serve was the key, when she was making first serves, she was dominate from the left-hand side, but when she struggled, that was the most vulnerable game of the four servers (when Maria got belted at the net). Both teams were able to break in the deciding third set, and it looked like Collins and Kichenok would serve it out when leading 4-2 after breaking Rus, but not only were they pulled back, but eventually beaten 7-5. (6-4, 3-6, 7-5). Great stuff. Doubles is so fun to watch, and court 17 was packed and rocking! Great venue! Court 17 holds perhaps 1,500, I would say. And we found some shade under the camera and commentator both, on a pleasant NY day. Not moving from there!

Ostapenko v. Pera

Really close match 4-6, 6-3 that suddenly wasn't. Pera just seemed a bit slower and not as prepared as the match got to the end of second and beginning of the third. Both players hit so hard, but if you don't receive well, line it up precisely (positioning, footwork, preparation and thus timing - the receiving skills) your power is going to misfire. Shots Pera wasn't missing in the first two sets were a bit flatter and slightly sailing wide or long. Then it got a bit nervy for Ostapenko as her serve seemed to fall into the East River, but she prevailed 6-3 in the third. Pera just couldn't make enough shots when her opponent was trying to let her back in the match. How often is that true! To sense the game state, and the mental state of your opponent and then to be able to capitalize, is such an important skill in competition. This climaxed in an amazing incident near the end of the match where someone in the crowd right behind the player's box had really been riding Ostapenko and cheering very actively for Pera the whole match. Ostapenko's team, at one point, seemed very upset, and for a brief instant, I thought there might be fisticuffs in the stands. The umpire had to tell the guy to calm down, "Please, sir!" After Ostapenko won an ugly, but crucial game to go up 5-1, the guy left the stands, and Ostapenko practically ushered him out, walking to the edge of the stands and waving him away, underhand, as he walked up the steps, like sweeping trash off the floor. Not to mention all the screaming she was doing at her box about the guy and the state of her crumbling game (while she was winning!!!!) in the several games before that. On the scoreboard she looked solid, and anything but in real time. I don't think I have ever seen a player loose it that bad with a person in the crowd. Interestingly, after the guy left, Ostapenko quickly dropped 2 games, losing her serve badly, and the 5-3 lead looked precarious with Pera serving, and only down one break and momentum clearly with her. But Pera just couldn't get enough balls in to keep the pressure on. Sensing when your opponent is struggling mentally, and "helping them lose it" (give them the rope, within the rules, by playing well and smart) is a key part of the mental game. I'm sure Pera has some serious regrets about the way that played out, but she couldn't position herself to receive the ball well enough to maintain the consistency and effectiveness of her shots. Of Ostapenko, who never looks fit, and Pera who does, it was Ostapenko who turned out to be the much fitter of the two, physically and in the end, mentally. Now she has two days to regroup.

Tiafoe from 30,000 feet. Next, we were off to the Louis Armstrong stadium and the general admission section, the upper decks (the upper reaches of the New York skyline). The place was packed, and rocking, everyone relishing in the phenomena that is Frances Tiafoe. I saw him play last year (when he made it to the semis) and now this year, and if you just looked at his results at the US Open, you would have to say this guy is not only exciting, but one of the contenders and one of the best players in the world. I don't know what happens when he leaves NY, but he clearly

doesn't do as well. Even from practically the top row at one point (I did move down a bit later, poaching seats as they became available like musical chairs on changeovers), you could totally get, receive, and enjoy his charm and charisma. And as I noted last year (when he knocked Nadal out of the Open), this guy has some of the best technique, partnered with a fearless belief. A truly modern player who doesn't hit the ball but receives it with precious little back swing and slings the ball into the open court with amazing force.

Orindawoods at the Open. It was great to spend the day on Court 17 and then in the high altitude reaches of Armstrong, with Adam and Maggie Reeves. We had a great time and so fun to connect in New York. After all, they both lived in NY, and met here as young lawyers, just a few years back. As I headed back to my hotel for a NorCal USTA dinner (so good), Maggie and Adam stayed on for the evening session and the amazing Novak Djokovic (4-6, 4-6, 6-1, 6-1, 6-3). Wozniacki's comeback also continued (4-6, 6-3, 6-1), but I missed all that for a night out at a Manhattan steak house, The Capital Grill. Oh well.... The price you pay. Truth be told, our Twilight Filet Mignon is better, but it was still a great dinner and a good time with friends and colleagues I've now worked with for four years.

Saturday, 9/2 The President's Suite.

Saturday was the day NorCal was invited to the President's Suite (lunch and tennis) at the Open. I was lucky enough to go twice last year (as NorCal's Delegate), seeing Serena's last match. Today was a relatively cool day in New York, and yet still nice to be in the confines of Ashe and out of the sun. Strange to think of Ashe as a place. Arthur was one of my favorite players growing up, and his win over Jimmy Connors at Wimbledon in 1975 remains my favorite match I ever watched. A tactical and strategic master class to beat a "superior" opponent. It is great to honor these incredible people by naming places after them, keeps them in the public memory, but also, they get a bit lost too. MacArthur and Nimitz were heroes, and not just freeways, or even a maze. So here is to you, Arthur Ashe. And BJK too. My heroes.

Alcaraz v. Evans

Entertaining, two players with a lot of personality and athleticism. Evans could push Alcaraz at times with amazing play, but not sustain the level long enough to take more than a set. But it was fun, and the players clearly brought enjoyment and passion to playing. One point after Evans made several ridiculous saves, only to have Alcaraz finally hit a ball he couldn't get, he threw his racquet down in frustration, realizing like Don Quixote he was chasing the impossible dream. No one could blame him, and everyone felt the futility and the courage of the noble pursuit. On another, after scrambling to save several strong Alcaraz shots, he was finally forced into giving Alcaraz an easy volley at the net, sure to be a winner. But the ball tipped the net and hopped over Alcaraz's racquet, a moment of deliverance from certain death! Evans clinched his fists in joy, like he'd hit the best shot of his life, then quickly realized it was kind of inappropriate under circumstances, and quickly raised his hand to apologize. Alcaraz just laughed the most natural laugh at Evans' rapid, head-snapping transformation, and they both had big smiles for several moments. The match was uber competitive and yet, in great spirit and joy. Tennis at its most enlightened expression. The crowd, and I, just loved it with great joy and gratitude to witness the play, the sportsmanship, and take it all in.

Pegula v. Svitolina

Pegula is the highest ranked American and #3 seed. Competitive match, two good players, not a lot between them over the first two sets, 6-4, 4-6 and to 2-2, then Pegula broke through and then held for 4-2. Broke again for 5-2 and the match just slipped away for Svitolina. Sometimes the margins are so close, every game close, to deuce even, multiple ads, and what separates #3 from #26? Just playing a couple of points better. One player having a great year, the other more average after having a great year in the past. The skill level just isn't that different. Somebody wins, somebody loses, and while there are not a lot of "upsets," you can totally see it happening. This was one of those matches. Good solid play, not Alcaraz wow, but you can be a very good player, just playing well, riding a hot streak, confidence high and living the dream. And I can empathize with the frustration players feel and express when all that is not quite there anymore. You can't help but think it's magic, lost forever and out of your control. And when it is there — joy, rapture — and you see all that in Alcaraz's smile, as well.

Sunday 9/3, Evening Session; Ashe

Djokovic v. Gojo and Swiatek v. Ostapenko looked like a great line up.

But before, Tiafoe reprise: Back at 30,000 ft. I got in Armstrong for the third set of Tiafoe v. Hijikata. You don't have to be close to appreciate how big this guy hits. Serves at 134 mph, but I love the modern style. Catching and throwing the ball, coming in when appropriate. Twice up a break on the third, he struggled, and Hijikata broke back. The stats are so interesting. Average rally 4 shots. Longest rally 25 shots. 3 shots or less 107 points, 4 shots or more 40 points. Tiafoe was 66/10/9 (<4 shots / 5-8 shots / >8 shots) on points he won, compared to 41/18/3 for Hijikata. Think about that a bit, most of the points are short (72% are <4 shots): a serve, a return and serve +1, then a miss or the 3rd shot was a winner. Tennis is not rallying, despite popular belief. For more on that, we turn to the evening matches on Ashe:

Sunday night, I watched both matches completely. Djokovic is so good, but it really wasn't that interesting. And yet that is really what works most of the time. And it is not that he isn't good, he's incredible, the depth on his shots, the way he forces his opponent, are clearly better than anyone else. He is a cut above. With Alcaraz, he has a problem

because the kid is just so good, and has a chance, but just on pure tactics and execution, Djokovic is a cut above, and considerable cut above. For football (soccer) fans, it's like Manchester City in the English Premier League, just so good it's almost boring and unfair (probably is in Man City's case, 154 legal charges against them).

I think Swiatek strives for the same thing as Djokovic, to just play better than anyone else. But in Ostapenko, she has a real problem. Swiatek has lost all four of their career meetings. With Ostapenko, much like Venus and Serena back in the day vs. Hingis (technically a better player), Swiatek just couldn't handle the pace out of nowhere. Reminded me a lot of Tiafoe's win over Nadal last year. Nadal was "playing better tennis" but couldn't deal with the modern "attack from anywhere, to anywhere" game. Ostapenko did the same, and she missed a lot, but made too many. Impressive, especially the way she kept her confidence when the match reached the finishing stage.

I think the difference is that when Djokovic is "playing the percentages" and "only hitting shots he can make" he does it with more quality. The shots are deeper, and he defends the strong shots better (He gets the ball back to a place and depth that he is not really hurt that often). Not that he gets every ball, Gojo hit some amazing, untouchable shots, but average spot the opponent is attacking from is behind the baseline, and too often Ostapenko was able to probe, get Swiatek to hit just slightly short, and then overpower her with the next one from inside the baseline. Late in the match the average rally length was 3 shots for the women, and 5 shots for the men. An extra shot or two for Gojo to miss. The men clearly had a lot more of the longer rallies as well, as Djokovic was not so exposed when attacked, and Gojo is a bit more consistent in his shot making than Ostapenko. Ostapenko was kind of all or nothing, but "all" more often than "nothing" in this match.

Both Gojo and Ostapenko had huge serves, and again the difference is that Djokovic serves very well, with almost as many aces and winning percentage on his serve (he sets up the points so well), whereas Ostapenko serves so well, but Swiatek's serve, while often placed very well and effective, when it wasn't as strong, it was a liability.

For the first time in all these years, I did see Djokovic just totally rip one, near the end, match in hand, and I think he just wanted to "have some of the fun" the other players are having when he isn't busy "being the best player possible" (i.e., disciplined). The smallest of wild sides, and indulgence. Nobody's perfect. ☺

For Swiatek, who is such a great returner, and clearly looked more comfortable in the games Ostapenko was serving, it is a bad match up, because Ostapenko serves well enough that Swiatek just doesn't get enough good looks to win a match. So, an upset in terms of the rankings, the #1 player losing, but on the court, it did look like the best player won. In an overall season, against all the women's players, Swiatek is better than Ostapenko, but head-to-head, not so much. Swiatek is now 0-4.

It is a good reminder for us all about rankings: they don't predict the outcomes of matches, because tennis is an interaction between 2 or 4 players, in real time, and sometimes you just don't match up well, your skills verse hers.

Monday 9/4 Labor Day

Grandstand, Azarenka / Haddad Maia vs Kati / Sutjiadi.

Power, overpowering power vs overpowered good doubles players. More errors, more winners. Reminds me of some advice: "Playing better is better than great teamwork and great strategy". Two 4.5 singles players who never play doubles will beat a 3.5 accomplished doubles team and partnership, the 4.5s just hit the ball too well.

So, know strategy reasonably well, but work on how you stroke the ball. And why most pros I watch don't change their tactics when losing, they just attempt to raise their level. Azarenka / Haddad Mala had quite a level, won 6-2, 6-0.

Gauff / Pegula v. Kostyuk / Ruse.

Well, I had perfect seats in the Grandstand for the match, and then the court announcer said the match was moved to Ashe (and he forgot to mention they were letting everyone in, that you didn't need an Ashe ticket, which I didn't have until evening. Well, I got there eventually).

In the first set, Gauff / Pegula we're winning 70% of their first serve points and only 48% of their second serve points. 48% is quite good, but you can really see the value of getting your first serve in. You don't have to blast it but get the first one in when you opponent is a bit more in a defensive mindset.

And one of the most underrated skills to work on in tennis at any level is the second serve return. If you get some first serves back, fine (but you'll still probably lose most of those points). You win a match on how well you serve and how well you return second serves. A second serve is often the weakest, shortest shot you will see with any regularity in a match. This is your chance to attack.

As for tactics of returning, volleying is hard, much harder than when I was young due to the pace of the incoming shots. It's still important to volley, and play the net, especially in doubles, but high-paced groundstrokes and returns are very hard to volley. Aim big groundstrokes towards the middle (biggest part of the court) and see if the net person can handle the pace. There were lots of missed volleys in this match and the previous match as well, by the server's partner (the best positioned net player) due to extreme pace of shot. Impressive, and a bit worrying as a net player out there trying to survive, let alone thrive. It's open season. With the court being much short when you are at the net, the

key to the volley is to take pace off the ball, return it slower than it came to you. Hard to do on extreme-paced shots. Yet another skill to work on, shots right at the net player. It's best to practice the skills that win you matches.

As a receiver, controlling the service returns is also a challenge. First serve returns can be similar to volleys, hard to control, if the server can get enough on it and get a high percentage in. You need some spin (topspin or underspin) to keep the ball in, don't just block it.

Men's doubles is somewhat unwatchable if there are really big servers, as there are so few returns. Women's doubles is probably the best action to watch in tennis right now. Fast paced, exciting! More balanced between serve and return. Of course, every time I go to a tournament, and see the large crowds watching doubles, it's hard to understand why doubles is not broadcast on TV more. I think doubles has a lot of appeal to fans that play a lot of tennis, and most players play mostly doubles, but to the more casual fan, and the general sports fan, the singles and big names pull in the TV ratings. That's my best guess.

Tennis is really two sports, singles, and doubles, which is kind of unique (besides volleyball, track and swimming), and it would be nice if both were accessible on TV. Dubs is fun to watch, and so easy to get caught up in the excitement. Ashe was 80% full for doubles and the match televised (why they moved it). There you go.

Gauff and Pegula hit more heavy groundstrokes than their opponents, like Azeranka / Haddad Mala, earlier, and that was the big lesson today. Go big or go home. 6-4, 6-1.

Sabalenka v. Kasatkina. Monday Evening in Ashe.

For Gauff / Pegula doubles the roof was closed and the a/c on, lovely. There had been showers earlier. Now for the evening the roof is open, humidity high, and it's sweltering. Wow, what a change. Maybe we need an indoor court at OW. :-). Or thank you so much, we love you California!

My overall impression of the Open, like last year, is the power players are getting so good they have the advantage over the touch / technical / tactical players,

Unless their name is Djokovic, who still has plenty of power, but builds points rather than bludgeons their opponents. Sabalenka is forcing Kasatkina to stand on average 13 feet farther back. Some of it is style but it's pretty hard put your opponent under pressure when you give up that much court. My favorite point was Sabalenka blasting a forehand up the line (inside in) and then taking Kasatkina's scrambling, weaker return and rolling a backhand short angle which left Kasatkina only watching from so deep in the court. The angle is one way to play the deep hitter, or someone who returns from deep in the court, but you must have the shot (more practice — so many skills to be an accomplished player).

They played 12 games (one hour) before Kasatkina held serve the first time. Like Swiatek, she just tries to hold on and hope Sabalenka goes cold. It's a good lesson for when we find ourselves playing someone who is hot. It can happen, so don't give up. I saw two matches on TV, Wimbledon & French Open finals, where Graf was dead and buried, and in the end, held the winner's trophy when Novtina and Hingis, respectfully lost it mentally. Here, Sabalenka just needs to serve it out. She holds serve 82% of the time, tops on the tour this year. But, power players who go for it can get a bit nervy at the end, and Sabalenka lost this service game at 5-2. The margins are small for the power hitters. As for the match, Sabalenka was just too good, especially returning, and broke again, 6-1, 6-3. Impressive.

Ostapenko, Sabalenka, Keyes, all big hitters beating skilled, touch, tactical players. Sabalenka hit 15 FH, 10 BH winners to 2&4 for Kasatkina. 31 to 7 winners overall. Ugh. Trying to be consistent against that seems to just lead to a consistent outcome, throughout the weekend to a lot of top seeds.

Interesting side note, the women's ball is heavier this year, and it seems to be favoring the big hitters. They are keeping their power shots in. The men's ball has been heavier for years. The original idea was to slow the game down by making the ball heavier.... Ops, that didn't work. ☺

Zverev v. Sinner.

My last Match. 9:30 p.m. EDT. Doubt I'll make it to the end. Feels like a "2a.m. match". I have a flight back to Orindawoods, in the morning. Our tennis paradise. It will be great to be home.

Zverev looks like a world #1. Hasn't happened for him yet but got to #2 before that terrible semi-final injury at Roland Garos derailed him a year ago. He has that certain fluidity, poise, and style. Can go big (serves in the 130s) but touch and placement too, and tactical awareness. And he floats around the court, even though he is 6'6". Sinner is an animal, and a battler. Like I said, 2 am. They have been playing for 28 minutes and it is 3-2, Zverev serving now, having just broken through.

Side note: They just put a graphic up on the board most hard-court matches won this year. Djokovic is eighth, with 24 matches won. Sometimes stats don't tell the whole picture, Yeah, he is eighth in wins, but he is 24-1. Think that puts him top. Looked like it last night.

Zverev took a small break at deuce to get a towel. "I've never had to get a towel in my life." It's that kind of hot, sticky night. Both players going for the towel every point. They look at their slippery grips like it's betrayed them.

Styles of play: Zverev going bigger, Sinner more variety and better net play. Still think this could be a 4+ hour match. I left at 3-4, and they had played close to an hour. Great tennis, amazing skill, but I have that flight in the morning.

Well, it ended at 1:38 a.m. in the morning, 4 hours, and 41 minutes, Zverva winning in five, long after I went to bed. A classic, but a little late for me. It was the 7 pm match back home on TV, so some of you might have watched until the end. Hope so. For me, I loved the skill of the players, but I seldom have time to watch anything for 5 hours. I guess it is something you do when you are away, on vacation. In New York City. Not a bad way to spend your time in those circumstances. Very enjoyable.

I didn't see a lot of sights but took the subway around Brooklyn to get to a couple of brew pubs, and ate in Little Italy and Chelsea Market, and a wonderful French place in Midtown, and the Capital Grill for our annual USTA NorCal night out. Had lunch at a Jewish Deli (world's best food) as well. A challenge to eat dairy and wheat free, which I failed to do for most of the weekend (had to have the Matzos Ball Soup, not to mention French Onion Soup), but kept my failings reasonable, and it was a great trip! Now it is wonderful to be back home, and share what I learned with you.



Orindawoods Tennis Club - Fall 2023 Junior Tennis
650 Orindawoods Drive, Orinda, CA 94563

Fall 2023 Junior Tennis at Orindawoods Tennis Club (OTC) will operate from Monday, August 21, 2023, to Monday, November 6, 2023. Junior Tennis at OTC is directed by Head Tennis Professional, Erik Oehlschlager. We aim to enrich the lives of local area kids by providing quality tennis instruction in a fun and positive environment. Groups are formed based on player levels and the following grade school designations: Transition Kindergarteners and Kindergarteners (TK & K); First and Second Graders (1st & 2nd), Third through Fifth Graders (3rd - 5th), and Sixth through Ninth Graders (6th - 9th). We use two player level categories for groupings: 1) development groups - those learning to develop service, groundstroking, and ball tracking skills that are necessary for playing points; and 2) player groups - those that have demonstrated the ability to play points using service, return-of-service, and groundstroke rallying skills. Participation in the player groups is by invitation only and limited to 3rd through 9th graders. If you are interested in participating in Fall 2023 Junior Tennis at OTC please contact Erik Oehlschlager via email at erik@orindawoodstennis.com.

Fall 2023 Junior Tennis costs and the schedule of daily times for all groups are summarized below in Table 1.

TABLE 1. FALL 2023 GROUP AND COST SCHEDULE

GROUPS AND TIMES	COST AND SESSIONS			
	MONDAY 8/21 - 11/6	TUESDAY 8/22 - 10/24	WEDNESDAY 8/23 - 10/25	THURSDAY 8/24 - 10/26
TK & K DEVELOPMENT 3:15 - 4:00 PM	MEMBERS \$185 NON-MEMBERS \$210		MEMBERS \$185 NON-MEMBERS \$210	
1ST & 2ND DEVELOPMENT 3:15 - 4:00 PM		MEMBERS \$185 NON-MEMBERS \$210		MEMBERS \$185 NON-MEMBERS \$210
3RD - 5TH DEVELOPMENT 4:00 - 5:00 PM	MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275		MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	
3RD - 5TH PLAYER 4:00 - 5:00 PM		MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275		MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275
6TH - 9TH DEVELOPMENT 5:00 - 6:00 PM	MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275		MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	
6TH - 9TH PLAYER 5:00 - 6:00 PM		MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275		MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275

The Fall 2023 Junior Tennis date schedule is presented below in Table 2, along with planned dates for Winter 2023/2024, Spring 2024, and Summer 2024 Junior Tennis.

TABLE 2. 2023/2024 DATE SCHEDULE

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S				
AUG 23		1	2	3	4	5			5	6	7	8	9	10	11			4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	NOV 23	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
	13	14	15	16	17	18	18		19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4		
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		26	27	28	29	30	1	2			25	26	27	28	29	1	2	3	4	
27	28	29	30	31	1	2																					
SEP 23	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	DEC 23	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		10	11	12	13	14	15	16			10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		17	18	19	20	21	22	23			17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		24	25	26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
OCT 24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	JAN 24	31	1	2	3	4	5	6			31	1	2	3	4	5	6			
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		7	8	9	10	11	12	13			7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		14	15	16	17	18	19	20			14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		21	22	23	24	25	26	27			21	22	23	24	25	26	27			
								28	29	30	31						28	29	30	31							
FALL '23 DATES							WINTER '23/24 DATES							SPRING '24 DATES							SUMMER '24 DATES						