



# 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*

## 2019 Season

### Monday Team Tennis

Monday Team Tennis has one week to go, with a tight race for first place. Standings after 14 weeks (through August 13th):

Team	W	L	PCT	GB
M'Liss / Marilyn	605	515	.540	0
John / Becky	588	532	.525	17
Chris / Rich	537	583	.479	68
Cindy / Denis	510	610	.455	95

As you can see, the teams are quite close this year. The standings are updated each week on the website, and in the glass display case on the club deck. In the all-important weather standings (see the website), we have had more nice days than cold days, so it's a successful summer season!

## Summer / Fall Schedule

### Twilight Tennis BBQs

Our first three Twilights have been great fun, and we are looking forward to couple more this summer. Join us for some fun mix and match tennis, a great dinner, and some excellent company. The cost is only \$20 / person. Let us know if you are playing tennis (non-players are welcomed), and if you want steak or chicken. Bring your own beverage, and we'll take care of the rest! The dates for the remaining tennis socials are:

**September 15<sup>th</sup>** Sunday Tennis 4-6pm Dinner 6:15pm  
**October 13<sup>th</sup>** Sunday Tennis 4-6pm Dinner 6:15pm

To register, contact Keith ([keith@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:keith@orindawoodstennis.com)).

I'm looking forward to a great summer of much tennis fun! Join us!

## Tennis Tip:

### What Tennis Players Know

After you play tennis for a little while, there are a couple of things that all tennis players know at a very deep, subconscious, habitual level. And every player knows these things, and the more they play, the better they know them.

One is the distance between their hand and the middle of the racquet. They may even have a couple of distances memorized. Like if they hold it down farther on the grip on the serve, and higher up on the volleys. Both are locked in. A second is which way the face of the racquet is pointing.

Don't believe me? Consider this: if a ball is traveling 40-50 mph, every degree that you tilt the racquet back, the ball will land six feet farther. In other words, three degrees off or so, and you couldn't get the ball in very often. Yet even advanced beginners hit the ball in a lot, and this just improves with practice. Trust me, we know which way the racquet is pointing at contact.

When we miss, we get distracted (often chasing the ball) and forget about the aiming part (which way the face is pointing). But we know which way it is pointing if we focus on that. We can sense very small,

## Pool Scene

The Orindawoods Tennis Club pool is open through October. We're not big on rules, but safety first is the biggest.

### Pool Rules

- Hours: dawn to dusk, spa until 9 pm.
- Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult
- No Lifeguard (best to have a swim buddy and not swim alone)
- No running
- No diving
- No glass in the pool area
- No pets in the pool area (sorry Rover)
- The gas BBQ is for Club Events only, but there is a charcoal BBQ for your use. Bring your own charcoal.
- Guest kids are \$1, adults \$5
- In order to preserve staff sanity, the game of Marco Polo is forbidden. ☺

## Weekly Lessons

### Hit and Fit:

*TRX workout (strength and stretching) & tennis drills using the Playmate ball machine.*

Friday 10:30-12 noon \$20  
 Saturday 7:30-9 a.m. \$20

### Tuesday Ladies' Clinic:

Tuesdays at 9:30 \$5

### Thursday Men's Clinic:

Thursdays at 9:30 \$5

The men's and women's clinics are drop-in. **Register** for Hit and Fit by e-mailing Keith you are attending.

## OW Jr. Championships

October 10/19-10/21. All Courts. Check with Keith or Patric for details!

## Court Washing

First and fourth Fridays of the month. 12-3 p.m. Check the court scheduler for which courts are available for play.

## Quote of the Month:

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference."  
— Robert Frost.

minute shifts in the angle of the face of the racquet. How can we use this information most effectively?

**Get our hand in position** (the distance our hand is away from where the ball will be contacted) early, but:

**Rotate the racquet** (by rotating our arm in our shoulders, and some wrist extension), back, down and on an angle to get the string face out of alignment. When the ball arrives, roll the hand and arm back into alignment, both with the ball and with the target. This is how elite players play.



## Orindawoods Tennis Club

650 Orindawoods Dr.  
Orinda, CA 94563

Phone:  
925-254-1065

Fax:  
925-254-1380

Website:  
orindawoodstennis.com

Smart Phone Reservation App:  
PlayTennisConnect

**Twitter:**  
@orindawoodstc

**Facebook:**  
Orindawoods Tennis Club

**Executive Tennis Director:**  
Keith Wheeler  
keith@orindawoodstennis.com

**Head Pro:**  
Patric Hermanson  
patric@orindawoodstennis.com

**Tennis Staff:**  
Nathan Sharafian  
Ethan Arroyo

**Weekend Staff:**  
Peter Reaves  
Nathan Sharafian

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Keith Wheeler

**The Elite Player Challenge:** In fact, the more elite the player, the less time the racquet is in alignment. And the more often it is precisely in alignment when the ball is on the strings. In other words, the strings are only in alignment at the moment of contact, and it is the moving into alignment (and then out of alignment on the release) that makes the racquet head move quick, producing power and spin.

**Troubles for the Rest of Us:** Because we know how we want the racquet to line up, or face at contact, we tend to line it up that way too soon, or all the time, choosing to focus on just making contact. But the elite players only have it lined up at contact. The rest of the time, the racquet face is actually out of alignment, and it is this extreme out of alignment position that leads to most of the power and spin in today's modern tennis game.

**How can we have the racquet so far out of alignment and find that ball?** We use the first thing that we know, the distance between my hand and the ball. So, we get the hand into that distance relatively early, but rotate the shoulder, arm, wrist out of position. Because the hand "isn't moving" (especially in the depth dimension: i.e. forward), we simply have to rotate the head back into alignment (the second thing we know). A move that is very quick (power and spin) and relatively simple. This is using what we know to best advantage!

**How does this look** on TV or courtside at a big tournament? Players seem to be moving slow with their hands, almost gliding the racquet into position, the forward move, winding up until the very last moment. The stroke, unwinding or firing of the racquet is very short (though there may be quite a large follow-through because so much speed is generated and needs room to dissipate). The rhythm is "slow and go," or "wind up and release". Or the always favorite, "load and explode".

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### "The Hardest Thing in Tennis"

I often catch myself saying when teaching lessons that, "This is the hardest thing in tennis." But I say that about a lot of things. Sometimes I'll be more honest, and say, "This is one of the hardest things in tennis," but the point is there are several quite challenging things in this game that we love and play.

Another way of saying this is that there are a lot of things that we must learn to do, that are not the natural way we would approach the task, given no training or practice. So let me share with you the hardest thing in tennis (ha ha).

The hardest thing in tennis is ... the split between the upper body and the lower body. They are often doing very different things, and we tend to like everything doing the same thing. An example would be, in tennis you often want to have quick feet and slow hands.

This leads to the second part of the problem, because the upper body needs to be much more still, lower body move much more, and that is the exact opposite of what we want to do, or what comes naturally. Hands are quick, feet are slow. We need the opposite: quicker feet and slower hands.

The hardest thing in tennis is .... waiting. Patience is not our strong suit. Letting the ball come back to the proper spot (in relationship to my body, my stroke) is very difficult. This is particularly hard on shots where we don't feel like we have a lot of time, like running forehands or volleys.

The hardest thing in tennis is .... that it seems like a simple game, you see the ball, you hit the ball. And if tennis was just hitting the ball, it would be simple (and boring). But it isn't just hitting, or hitting at all. We must get the ball over

the net, and into the court, before it sails long. This requires, at the more advanced level, rolling the ball, or catching, driving and releasing the ball, as opposed to hitting it. We seldom want direct hits, and almost always want to apply some spin to control our shot. Spin also makes it harder to track for our opponents. Most contacts are intentional

mishits. A brushing of the ball, not a direct contact. There are techniques for doing this that take a while to master, but have huge rewards.

The hardest thing in tennis is .... sticking with my form vs chasing the ball (just making contact). As stated above, it is relatively easy to "hit" the ball. Making it go in, especially fast, with spin, accuracy and deception, takes years of practice and work. And of course every ball that comes to you is different, often in very subtle but significant ways, and that is very difficult. In fact the hardest thing in tennis may be when you think you have an easy one, and everything is all set up. It's almost never is easy, or set up. And there are no easy shots.

The hardest thing in tennis is ... to stop hitting the ball, and start catching, driving and releasing the ball with spin.

The hardest thing in tennis is.... knowing when to initiate contact, verses what is just winding up. Most of the movement towards the ball should be wind up, coil, or preparation, and not swing or force towards the ball. Where does the wind up end, and the stroke begin? (see "What Players Know" above for some clues).

One of the hardest things about tennis is ... there is a lot of really bad advice or teaching out there. For example: "Take your racquet back" ("get your racquet back") is the worst advice ever given. You want to wind up, you want to coil, you want to prepare, but that isn't getting your racquet back (in fact, you want to get your racquet handle forward, with the head pointed down and back). (See "What Players Know").

The hardest thing in tennis is ... timing the split step. Wow that is difficult. Too early and you're just standing there, too late and well... you're late (getting moving). You want to be in the air at the moment of recognition (see last month's newsletter for more details) so you can turn midair and land bouncing towards the ball. Footwork is about observing the action, and moving appropriately, and not just running around, or bouncing up and down. Move your feet because it helps you to cover the court, not to just move your feet.

The hardest thing in tennis is ... learning to distinguish between the things we seem to just do naturally (grab a stick i.e. racquet, hold on to one end and just swing it) vs the body's more graceful movements, which often don't seem natural starting out, and take a long time to learn and master. A good player looks like a natural, they move with ease. In this case, a natural is someone who has practice a lot. Their body moves naturally, but it wasn't what they were born with. It's learned, and trained, and then executed, often under situations that most people would break down under (pressure).

The hardest thing in tennis is ... to stay calm. To panic is natural, to stay calm takes a lot of mental / emotional training, and in turn makes staying calm look natural. "To keep your head when all around are losing theirs and blaming you." – Kipling.

The hardest thing in tennis is .... watching the ball without letting the ball own you. In other words, you have a job to do, read, move, wind up, execute your stroke, while still tracking the ball and adjusting to its flight. Over focus on the ball, and you don't do the rest of your job. Under focus, and you don't get to the right place, or maintain balance on contact. Focus on the ball when they hit and when you hit. But more of the focus is on your form when you move to the ball and wind up. And then, keep the head down after contact (instead of watching the ball go back over the net too soon) You need to look up in time to focus on their contact, before that, not so much. Though you want to position based on where you play that ball. That's a lot of shift in focus – not easy!

The hardest thing in tennis is ... to do what we know is best, when there is a very strong emotional desire to do something else, often the opposite. All the statistics say, for example, that covering and hitting to the middle in doubles is by far the best way to play, yet the fear of being passed down the line, and the desire to hit down the line shots, keep many players from achieving their potential. The only way to really change this is to change our beliefs, because beliefs are what fuel emotions. Losing a point to a down the line shot is no worse than losing a point any other way. In fact, it is better, because it is hard to hit shots down the alley, and people will make a lot of mistakes trying.

The hardest thing in tennis is .... to only hit shots you can make. I mean, that's pretty much it. We just constantly make poor choices or poor execution of shots that leads to most of our failings in the sport. Shot selection is crucial to success. We either think too grandiose, or play it way too safe, and have a hard time finding that middle ground. By the way, "shots you can make" doesn't mean you make it every time, just enough to reach your potential. If you hit four very strong shots and miss one, I would say that is hitting shots you can make.

So finally, the hardest thing in tennis is ... fighting our perfectionist, judgmental, exacting personality and criticism of ourselves (and sometimes our partners). Tennis is a lousy game for perfectionist, but a game that requires, precision, skill, focus and ultimately mastery. Perfectionism and mastery are often confused, and couldn't be farther apart. Nothing promises as much, and delivers as little (besides hell), as perfectionism. It's difficult to choose precision over perfection, but there is a difference, particularly where you end up. "Two road diverged in a wood, and I, I took the one less traveled by. And it has made all the difference."

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## **Avoiding the 3.5 Winner**

Most club players, if they play a lot, reach the 3.0 to 3.5 level, but get no farther (no matter how much they play). Some people get stuck at 4.0 instead. What limits our continued growth?

Sometimes it's physical ability, but there are often 4.0s and even 4.5s with no more physical ability or conditioning than we have. Often the stronger players have a bit better technique, but there are many examples of 4.0s and even

4.5s that don't. Sometimes it's mental toughness that makes the difference, or shot selection (we've discussed this recent newsletters). Then there is positioning, and reading the game.

One of the mistakes that I see that is so correctable is what I call "the 3.5 winner."

Here is an example: you hit a very good shot, one of the best shots you have hit in the match, way out wide. Your opponent is scrambling, running as quick as the can. They reach out, full stretch, in desperation, and seemingly flick a ball back, with even greater angle, for a clean winner. Everyone goes crazy with praise and admiration for this amazing shot. Wow!

And it is a great shot. Probably the best one they will hit today.

The problem is not how great they hit it, or where it went (amazing!), but that it was totally predictable. In a 4.0 or certainly a 4.5 match, you'll see this same shot, but the player that played the first angle will move over and cover the return. In the case, the 4.5 knows the appropriate tennis adage, "angle gets an angle." (there is also "middle to middle" "short to short," "deep to deep," "lob gets a lob" and many, many others).

In other words, most shots (70+%) are predictable, no matter how good they are, and we can adjust our position and take away a lot of our opponent's "winners." I.e. they are only winners because we let them be winners.

With great shots, comes predictable returns. You have two choices:

1. Don't give them the shot, i.e. expose yourself to the 3.5 winner, by hitting the ball there.
2. Cover it.

Sometimes your shot was not intentional, sometimes it is, but you can always cover the possible returns. Instead of saying, "Wow, look at that!" Both after your shot ("I'm so good"), and then theirs ("Oh, they're better.").

In the bigger picture of match strategy and tactics, we can use placement to dictate the return. We don't necessarily hit it wide to hit a winner (we might get a winner if they don't cover it), but to force them to hit the ball back to me. Maybe I've been pulled way off the court and can't run far enough to cover a middle or down the line shot. Hit a big angle and they will be forced to angle back. Of course, if they don't understand this, they might not move over, and I just hit a "3.5 winner." You can laugh (to yourself – be kind) all the way to the trophy presentation. 3.5 no more!!!!

## Fall Junior Program 2019

The 2019 Fall Junior Clinics begins the week of **August 26<sup>th</sup>**, and will continue thru the week of **December 9<sup>th</sup>**. There will be no classes the week of **November 25-29**. There will be **no Tuesday classes on October 22<sup>nd</sup>**. The 15-week program will be led by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson**. The Level 1 and II classes will be taught using aspects of the USTA 10 and under Development Program.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>	<u>One day/week</u>	<u>Two Days</u>
<b>I</b>	<b><u>Lil' Ones</u></b> <i>The <b>Lil' Ones class</b> is for the always adorable 4-6 year olds. We will be developing the coordination and balance of these young players as well as giving them an introduction to tennis using age appropriate balls and court size.</i>	<b>Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm</b>	<b>\$175*</b>	<b>\$275*</b>
<b>II</b>	<b><u>Future Stars Group</u></b> <i>The <b>Future Stars Group</b> is for our 7 to 10 year old players. The players will be working with 10 and under balls on 36', 60' and full courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games, and match play are all part of the curriculum as we work our way up to green dot balls and full court.</i>	<b>Tuesdays 4-5:30pm</b>	<b>\$320*</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>III</b>	<b><u>Tennis Development Group</u></b> <i>In the <b>Tennis Development Group</b> we will work on refining technique, improving footwork and developing strategic awareness for successful match play. This class is for beginning through intermediate players ages 11 thru 14.</i>	<b>Thursdays 4-5:30pm</b>	<b>\$345*</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>IV</b>	<b><u>Tournament Training Group</u></b> <i>The <b>Tournament Training Group</b> is an <u>invitation only</u> class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.</i>	<b>Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm</b>	<b>\$435*</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Non-members: add \$25 (\$15 for Lil' Ones).**

We have factored into the cost of the clinics, the potential of two weeks of missed classes due to rain, smoke and other environmental disturbances.

**Special Discount:** 10% discount off the cost for the second sibling. Discount taken of the lower of the two costs.

**Inclement Weather:** In the case of questionable weather (rain), please check [orindawoodstennis.com](http://orindawoodstennis.com), court conditions page.

**Tennis shoes required** (no shoes whose soles mark the court)

**Cell phone** use during class time is limited to emergencies or with consent of a coach.

**For more information or to sign up**, please contact Patric ([patric@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:patric@orindawoodstennis.com)) or Keith ([keith@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:keith@orindawoodstennis.com)).