



# Orindawoods Tennis News

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*

## Twilight Tennis Summer Season

One of our great traditions here at Orindawoods Tennis Club is our Twilight Social Tennis BBQs. Each summer we have several of these relaxing, fun, tennis evenings.

**Our next-to-the-last Twilight Tennis BBQ for the season is Sunday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, with tennis from 4-6 p.m., followed by a BBQ on the club deck.**

A Twilight is an awesome way to spend a Sunday evening with friends and tennis partners. Players can meet other club members and find new tennis partners. And the food ain't bad, either. Non-players are also welcomed for dinner. (No non-players for tennis, please. ☺ )

**The date of the final Twilight Tennis party for this summer will be Sunday, October 7, 4-8 p.m., \$20.**

A Twilight is two hours of mix-and-match tennis, followed by BBQ on the Club deck. We serve a choice of filet mignon or chicken breast, with salad, baked beans, dessert and all the fixin's. Bring your own beverage.

To register, contact Keith. [keith@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:keith@orindawoodstennis.com). Cost \$20 ea.

## Orindawoods Junior Championships

Every year the club hosts the Orindawoods Junior Championships. Our tournament is part of the USPTA Contra Costa County Junior Circuit. This year's tournament will be held on October 19-21. You can register for this event on the TopDog Tennis site.

**Questions?** Ask Keith or Patric for more information if you would like to play. We love hosting the tournament and supporting junior tennis, especially because it serves the more entry-level junior players, which is where most players are at in their development. There needs to be more support for the juniors who are just starting out in competitive tennis.

**Note:** The tournament will use all the Club's courts on Friday evening Oct 19, and Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 20-21. Thanks for your support of Junior Tennis. It's the future of our game, and of our Club.

## BALL and Fall Leagues

Weekday Ladies' League tennis is starting up in September. We have four teams this fall, Sr. BALL B2, Sr. BALL A3, BALL A3 and Fall A3. Most matches are played on Mondays and Fridays, leaving the rest of the week open for non-league play. League matches use Courts 4, 5 & 6. Warm up starts at 9 a.m., with the matches commencing at 9:30. Interested in playing? Contact Keith. Good luck this season to everyone!

## Tennis Tip:

### In the Short Run...

There are a lot of things in life that seem like a good idea at the time, or in the short run, but don't really pay off in the long run. In fact, you may have a strong feeling, or memory, that something works when, in fact over time, it really doesn't work very well, or often enough.

The classic example is most alcoholics know they should quit, but right now that thought is kind of stressful, so they need a drink to calm down. And they do calm down, and they do feel better. Short term.

**Strategy and tactics** are designed to give you a plan that keeps your long-term best interests in mind, rather than what just seems best at the

## Off Season Monday Night Tennis.

With the conclusion of Monday Team Tennis at the end of August, we will be once again hosting our Monday Night Tennis social play for those who register. If you are interested in getting in the rotation, let Keith know. Once again, superstar Denis Weil will organize our off-season tennis social night. Thanks Denis!

## The Pool Scene

The Orindawoods Tennis Club pool will be open through the end of October. The exact closing date is somewhat dependent on the weather. And we know how the weather can be...

### 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 (14 & under): \$1, adults \$5
- \* No Marco Polo (keep your staff sane)

## Court Washing

We do court washing on the last and first Fridays of the month. Court washing not only keeps the courts clean, but protects the surface. We also blow the courts off Mondays and Fridays.

## Used Ball Drop

Please support our tennis ball reuse and recycling program by placing your old balls in the used ball drop by the Pro Shop door. Thank you!

## Quotes of the Month:

"If you're ever feeling useless, just remember that someone is a lifeguard for Olympic swimming events."

"I've finally figured out California Cuisine. It is merely a delivery vessel for the avocado." – Nathan Sharafian

time. A good strategic plan has looked at the data over time for how to play, and takes into consideration the ups and downs of fortune, hot and cold streaks, and even dumb luck. And negating your bad habits.

Sometimes strategies can be summed up in a simple, but effective idea. Like the following:

**"Golf Wisdom"** There is an old saying in golf, "Drive for show, putt for dough."

In other words, the short game, or putting, is generally more important for winning than how far you hit the initial shot, no matter how impressive that is. Or more subtle "skill is more important than muscles." Or "the devil is in the details."

I was trying to think of a tennis equivalent for doubles and I think it would be "angle for show, middle for dough." Or we could try "alley for show, middle for dough." In the short run, you can win with some flashy points to the side. And seemingly lose a lot of points hitting it to the middle. But, in the long run, you'll win a lot of matches playing the middle.

**The cold, hard facts.** Most of the time, when you return serves in the middle, you will lose the point. The net person will often hit a winner. So why am I hitting it there?

**Winning 35% is great.** Why? The middle is better than all your other choices. It's the percentage play.

**Other options:** 1) Going down the alley probably wins 20% of the time, if that. Spectacular when it works; usually doesn't. And they hit even more winners from wide positions than the middle. 2) Going wide crosscourt, often the ball lands wide for an error, or right to the opponent's forehand with your team in a weak position (returner back or coming in, net player off the net). Again, you'll hit winners, even look brilliant, but lose too many points missing. Or setting them up. Success is in the 25-30% range. A bit better than the alley shot, but not your best choice.

This wide cross court return is so attractive because you don't run the risk of losing the point right away, with the net person volleying for a winner. But you lose the point later and one of the things that strategy understands is, losing is losing. It doesn't matter how. (First drink may not seem like much, but you are still drinking).

3) The last option from the back is you could lob, but this only works if the incoming ball is slow enough to get the ball over the net person and still keep it in. Very difficult on first serves with pace. So, the middle. 35% is better than every other option. Even if you win less than half, or close to only a third.

Another example is that it is better to hit a good serve, even if you miss some (double fault), than hit a serve "in" every time that they can beat you up with.

**How playing the middle works.** Look at your options when returning. Off a good serve, trying to place the balls on the sides of the court (alley or wide cross court) leads to lots of errors and a few winners. Cross court away from the net person puts the ball right where your opponent likes to hit it, forehand wheelhouse, on the side of the court with all the options (alley, middle, wide are open, see last month's newsletter). The ball landing in the middle 1/3 of the court is best.

You can increase your odds of winning by making the middle shot better. Add on's: hard would be nice. Low is nice, or high with spin ("the high, hard one").

Even though the middle shot seems to travel close to the net person, or right back to the server, over time the shot played here will win the most points.

How? 1) They just miss (fluff one -- more points are lost in tennis than won). 2) They hit a weak shot you can exploit. 3) They have no angle to hit a winner, so just hit it back to you (or miss). 4) The net person timidly lets it go and the ball ends up in the middle at the back, the least empowered place on the court. 5) There is confusion as to who should hit it and it goes between the opponents for a winner.

**On a second serve**, you can do better than win 35%. Higher percentages, but the best target location is still up the middle. The net person will be more inclined to cover their alley, as the returner has an easier shot. That means the middle is open, you can split them, your net person can move into the middle behind your shot and you give the server a shot from the middle, a shot with no angles and little options.

**And, if you are serving**, you can give them the middle situation uncontested by just serving the ball up the middle. If they get it back, just play it in the middle again, keeping them pinned and on the defensive. If you get an easy one, then angle it off, or drop shot, and put it away. Most of the time they will make the classic mistake: miss trying to avoid you. Some of the time, they'll hit a winner. It's the price of doing



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business, the price of being a winner.

On the ad side, you can serve out wide to the backhand, then play the next shot in the middle. You have the strong hand as the server (even if you don't hold "aces"). Put the serve in an awkward spot, place the net man in the way and make them try to play around you. When the serving team receives the return, the returning team is often in poor position: the net player off the net, and the returner either back on the baseline or somewhere in the middle – no man's land. The middle is still open, play your second shot, volley or groundstroke, there.

In other words: **Getting a lot of balls in and giving them no angles** (poor physics — last month's article) pays off the best. It's sort of like what Winston Churchill said about democracy. "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for every other one that has been tired."

**It's hard to break serve in doubles.** The serving team has a huge advantage. In professional tennis, a team winning 35% on the returns is doing great! You need the serving team to make some errors, and they are only going to make enough errors if you keep the pressure on them by 1) getting a lot of balls in, and 2) putting those balls in a place where it is hard for them to put them away (or they'll miss attempting to try). That's the middle.

**You break serve with 35% because** the mistakes bunch up sometimes, and you get a game where they make more. And if your serving, and they need you to make errors... don't make careless errors. Play the ball safe, in the middle and give them no angle. Yeah, they'll look mighty good some of the time with you hitting it right to them. But not good enough.

**The Stats Speak the Truth:** The winner of a match usually wins between 48 and 52% of the points. Hopefully you are getting 65% first serves in, and winning 75% of those. If you get close to 50% points won on your second serve, you are doing great. You probably won't be winning more than 25-30% on their first serve and, hopefully over 50% on their second. Tennis is a pretty even game. You need to take advantage when you have the advantage, and give them opportunity to miss when you are at the disadvantage.

Throwing away points when you have the advantage by taking unnecessary risks, or trying to blast your way out of a disadvantage by hitting winners, costs you precious points. Just a few points thrown away can be the difference between winning 52% and winning only 45%. In a 7-5, 6-4 match (22 games), where each game lasted an average of six points, that's 132 points. 69 points won is 52%. 59 points is 45%. 5-10 mistakes, or thrown away points, will swing you from winning to losing. It's often less than that. A lot of sets come down to one point or two, a 30-40 point, either played well or poorly, can change absolutely everything.

**Make it, take it.** When do I hit to the sides? 1) When I can make it AND 2) when it benefits me long-term. So, for example, if the alley is open and you can make it, take it. Or, more subtly, the alley is covered but you want to keep the middle open for later in the match, sometimes you can "send a message" even if it means the point will most likely be lost. I like to do this early in a match, on a shot I know I can make it (weak second serve or weak return of serve if I'm the server). As for angle, sometimes I hit angle because that is the only shot I can make. They have hit a very strong angle, and I just need to get it back the way it came. Or I see an opening on the angle, and I know I can make it.

**Styles of Play.** Pushers win more than blasters, but players with good strokes win the most. That is, people who get it in a lot tend to win but, if you get it in with something on it, that is better. So just blocking or pushing the ball in isn't going to work as well as getting it in with pace and spin, to a location that doesn't allow them much to do. This is the difference between players who win at 3.0 and those who win at 4.5. Good strategy, plus better strokes.

**The Trap.** Don't trust your memory. I can't emphasize this enough. You'll remember the great moments, or the terrible moments, and forget the average moments. The percentages (winning) are all about the average moments. We have all had the experience where we have played someone who didn't do a single spectacular shot, and beat us like a drum. We're not even sure how we lost, just that we got beat. If we have been around a while, we realize we got fooled by a master where, as if we are less experienced, we can't figure out what just happened. "Seemed like I hit most of the winners" or "I controlled all the points" or "my strokes are better" are common thoughts. And it is probably true. While actually, the opponent was doing all the little things, minding the average, that was going to lead to success in the end. And they never broke a sweat.

**Play the middle in doubles.** You'll lose a lot of points, and win a lot of matches. Good luck out there!

## Timing: The Tale of Two Lines and Two Forces

Timing is the hardest thing in tennis, or tennis is timing. Being in the right place, at the right time, moving in a way that gives us the best result possible, consistently. We can think of tennis as having two major lines: 1) the line that the ball moves on; and 2) the path of our stroke (see drawing).

**Out with The Old:** The simple, or "old style", way of thinking of these lines is like arrows moving in opposite directions, with contact being a head-on collision between the ball and the racquet (Fig. 1). While this is the simplest way to understand tennis, it just doesn't work very well. ("For every situation in life, there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong.") This sort of

## Weekly Lessons

### Hit and Fit:

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

Friday 10:30-11:30 a.m. \$15  
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.

movement is poor for aiming and produces a collision that has a lot of bounce (a pressurized, rubber ball hitting a trampoline). This "bounce contact" is very hard to manage, to control the length and/or speed (let alone width).

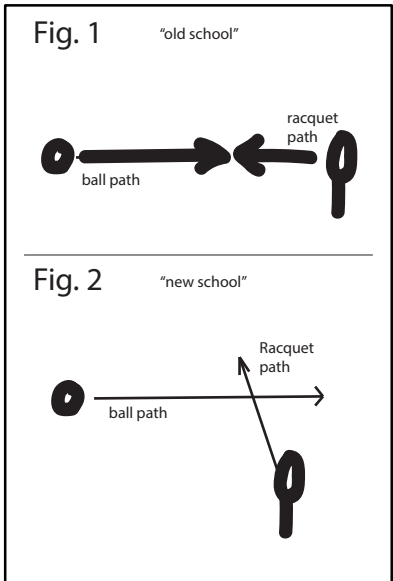
**In with The New:** The modern game, the power game we see on TV today, is based on a different model. There is the line the ball travels on, and that line is intersected in one specific spot by the line of the stroke (Fig. 2). At that point, the racquet is being thrust to the side (across the ball line) with leverage, and it is rotating (torque). These two forces, leverage and torque, are applied to the ball at a specific, predetermined point on the flight of the ball. Forward direction and force is not created by the racquet swinging forward (momentum=head-on collision=bounce=bad news) but, instead by racquet rotating into alignment with the ball and the target, while being thrust across the ball. With this sort of contact, the strings grab onto the ball (dig into the felt covering the pressurized rubber core) and turn the ball, adding spin to the natural bouncing effect of a rubber ball meeting a trampoline. It's an indirect hit that allows the ball to be turned, to be spun.

This seems more complicated, and much harder to learn than the collision model. It is. Sorry. And it is so much better there is virtually no one who is any good at elite tennis who plays the old, head-on collision way.

**Shoulders.** Since shoulders rotate much faster than they swing, the force created by these intersecting lines is potentially much greater than the swinging forward, collisions model. The force created is so great, using leverage and torque, you don't have to move very much to get a lot power and spin. This means that even though the two lines (line of the ball/line of the stroke) only intersect at one point to get the desired effect (power & spin), this isn't that hard because you don't have to do much to create force. The decisive movements are getting smaller and smaller in tennis. It's a pulse, or a push and a turn, right on the ball, a "one inch punch" right at this one specific point that has been arranged by the player.

**Applying this force** at just the precise time for optimum results is what timing is in tennis. With this small, quick movement (a push and a turn across the line of the ball), you can actually start to work on your timing where, as when you swing, you will never have good timing, other than causing a collision, that is not beneficial for playing the game.

**Think of three positions.** Right before contact, your strings would be touching the low inside part of the ball. Push forward from there (leverage) straight through the ball (across the line of the ball) and your arm naturally rotates (torque) and now you are touching the back side of the ball (moving across it). Keep pushing and your arm continues to rotate, and your strings are now touching the high outside part of the ball as the ball leaves contact. Master this move, the precision of this, and you will master timing, and tennis.



## Fall Junior Program 2018

The 2018 Fall Junior Clinics begin the week of **August 27<sup>th</sup>**, and will continue thru the week of **December 10<sup>th</sup>**. There are no classes the week of **November 19-23**. The 15-week program will be led by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson**.

The Level I 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>	<b>Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm</b>	<b>\$175*</b>	<b>\$275*</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>II</b>	<b><u>Future Stars Group</u></b>	<b>Tuesdays 4-5:30pm</b>	<b>\$345*</b>	<b>N/A</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>III</b>	<b><u>Tennis Development Group</u></b>	<b>Thursdays 4-5:30pm</b>	<b>\$345*</b>	<b>N/A</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>IV</b>	<b><u>Tournament Training Group</u></b>	<b>Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm</b>	<b>\$435*</b>	<b>N/A</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>*Non-members should add \$25 (Lil' Ones, only \$15).</b>			

We have factored into the cost of the clinics, the potential of two weeks of missed classes due to rain, illness, vacations, etc.