



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

Club Rules Updates:

Shelter In Place

The current rules run through January 7th. They are: members can play only within the household, with the ball machine and lessons are allowed. No mixing of households at this time.

See the Court Rules on the Website (Information menu) for the latest club rules. With changing Health Orders, it is hard to keep up sometimes. Right now, we are in SIP, but hopefully there will be a positive modification on January 7th. Find the latest on the website.

Looking Forward, Looking Back

Orindawoods, 2020 and 2021

Happy New Year! Are you ready for a new year? We are certainly hoping 2021 is an improvement on 2020, though many lessons were taught in a very challenging 2020. I have grown in many ways, but most certainly haven't been pleasant, yet seemingly important.

With the vaccine on the way, we are crossing our fingers for a return to something resembling the good ol' days by the summer. Junior program, parties, leagues, etc.... But if we learned anything from 2020, it is that we have to stay on our toes and adjust to the changing landscape. (One of the many lessons or reminders).

In that sense, life resembles tennis, as each ball that comes over the net is different, and we need to be constantly adjusting. Maybe there are some predictable patterns, but within that, every ball, every moment is unique. Strategy is seeing the patterns; focus is staying in the moment. We need both to excel.

In looking back at 2020, the main thing I feel is the gratitude I have for our great membership, for all of you. It has been such a rough year, on and off the court, and we just want to thank you all for hanging in there with us. Orindawoods is the most amazing tennis club that I have ever been associated with, and this year really put us all to the test. Thank you for being you, for doing you so well, and for teaming together to get through this really tough time. Certainly, the toughest year of my life. Who would have thought? I walk around town, seeing everyone in masks, and I still can't quite believe this could happen. One of our key Western philosophies is that everything is improving. We tend to think we are past things like a pandemic.

So, we are wishing that you stay safe in 2021, and we can all start to climb out of darkness, and into some tennis light. Hang in there, we are finding our way home.

2021 Lesson Rates

Keith & Patric

1/2 hour private \$45

1 hour private \$80

Jennifer (is taking time off)

1/2 hour private \$40

1 hour private \$75

Club Dues: \$140 / month (no change)

Weekly Lessons

Hit and Fit, Ladies, Men's clinics:

Canceled due to COVID-19.

Ball Machine

Ball machine is open again! The cost is \$40 through March. Reserve Court 3 to use the ball machine.

Quote of the Month:

*There is a road, no simple highway
Between the dawn and the dark of night
And if you go no one may follow
That path is for your steps alone*

*Ripple in still water
When there is no pebble tossed
Nor wind to blow*

*You who choose to lead must follow
But if you fall you fall alone
If you should stand then who's to guide you?
If I knew the way I would take you home*

- *Ripple*, Robert Hunter, Jerry Garcia

Tennis Tip / The Mental Game:

Tennis, Playing in the Household

Playing tennis, or any game for that matter, with members of the family can be wonderful, and also terribly dramatic, traumatic and unsettling. In these times when a lot of our activities are limited to times with our families, it would be great to be able to spend time together on the courts, or in other activities in a fun, nurturing and growing way.

"You didn't marry her for her backhand." This was one of the best pieces of advice I ever heard on playing with your partner. It is a moment of grace, or acceptance of where your partner is at. Tennis probably wasn't the reason you hooked up with your partner and is not the most important thing with your kids or parents either. We often want,

or expect, our partner to play better than they can, or are playing today. And we may be playing tennis now, at this moment, but tennis is not why we got together.



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Identification. Our partners, and family are often inside the bubble, our protective bubble, they often feel like they are part of us. The lines of demarcation are sometimes blurred. If you understand something, we often think the members of our family should understand that too. By osmosis, I guess. They are part of us. And while there are a great deal of shared experiences, this isn't true. They can't read your mind or read it accurately. Not completely.

"Because I learned this, you learned it too." This is part of Identification. Say you had a problem with your backhand, and you worked very hard for years to fix it. Now your partner seems to be having the same problem, and you think you have the answers and that they should get it much faster because they are "part of you." Sorry, doesn't work that way. They need their practice hits.

Trauma. We often have trauma around a situation or shot, say our forehand. And because we really struggled, and had a lot of feeling about our forehand, we transfer that struggle and feelings around that shot to our partners as well. When our partner misses a forehand, we immediately bring up all the feelings and struggles we have had around our forehand.

Your Partner isn't you. And the other way around. Just because you have a great backhand, doesn't mean your partner does too. Or should. We all know what we are supposed to do (or think we do), but that doesn't mean your partner looks at things the same way or has the same skills. And knowing what to do is only the first 10% of actually doing something. There is so much more to performance than knowing what to do. It is often said that it takes 10,000 hours to achieve mastery in an activity. Your partner doesn't get a free pass because you have done the 10,000 hours. They have to walk that path alone. You can support, but they have to take the time, hit the hits, live the dream.

How Many Hats? Loved One, Tennis Partner, Coach. These are very different roles, yet people often try to pull off two, if not three of these. Being a tennis pro, I've made this mistake many, many times in my personal life. Embarrassing moments to even recall for me. But you don't need to be a pro to make this mistake, trust me. Sort of like "You didn't marry her for her backhand", your primary role is loved one. Love should be unconditional. It shouldn't be based on whether they double faulted or not. Or if we beat the other couple in a "friendly, social game". As a coach, you have to push sometimes. The hand on the back, or the figurative boot on the backside. Your loved one or family member didn't hire you as their coach.

Be Careful What You Ask For Because It May Come True. And if they did ask you to coach them (some are unlucky enough to have a "tennis pro" for a partner), then they have to understand there is going to be some pushing, but that is dangerous, because sometimes when we are being challenged in life, we need our loved ones for support. Can someone be two people at once? Not easy. In most cases, not advisable. Better to hire a coach, than ruin a relationship. Just my two cents, based on many failures.

Support Team, Parenting On The Court. I think of all the hours I played tennis with my dad (two hours a day for the better part of ten years), and how little he told me about how to play. He didn't coach me, it wasn't his role, and somehow, he got that. When I was going absolutely mental, when tennis was torture for me, when it taxed my very soul, he was steady as a rock. It was a blessing. It was loving, it was parenting. The most intellectual, knowledgeable, wise, thoughtful person I have ever met, just kept his mouth shut. I stand in awe and wonder.

We didn't have a lot of money for tennis lessons, but my dad made sure that I got my tennis instruction from somewhere else. It didn't mean we didn't talk about tennis, but he didn't tell me what to do. Sometimes there were suggestions, but only if I asked. Mostly it was support, I'm behind you. There is a reason top pros, who can afford it, take a support team around the world with them on the tour. I don't mean their coach; I mean family and friends. And why it is so tough if you are just trying to make it on the tour, have no money for such support and you are all alone.

The primary relationship is about love and acceptance.

Growing Together. No matter who in the family you're on the court with, one way to grow, to achieve, is through being partners in learning, in growing. Trying to get better together, not against each other. Cooperative, rather than trying to best each other, or prove your worth or place in the family system.

And Competition. And competition can help you grow, if the intent is to help both people grow. Both should get stronger, and not have it be about putting the other down, or in their place.

Working Stuff Out. When we come to the court with our family, we bring all the family stuff along too. Somehow it jumps in the back of the car and rides right along with us to the club. If you are frustrated about something that happened at home, it is hard not to bring that frustration out onto the court. In a fine motor skill sport like tennis, were the slightest tension can throw you off, this has the potential for a train wreck. Someone may not have taken out the garbage, but your game will be garbage if you bring that overflowing trash can and frustration to the court.

The court isn't a great place to work out the other issues in the relationship or family.

The Monday Morning Quarterback. Tennis partners are not perfect. It is pretty easy to know what they should have done. "Why didn't you go close to the net?" It's pretty easy to see what you could have done, after the fact. Knowing in advance is a bit trickier. So, don't hold your partner to the standard of having a sixth sense, when you don't have one either, just hindsight. And even if you did have a sixth sense, (when you are in the zone, sometimes you can sense what is going to happen), that doesn't mean they do.

Competition and Farkle. Some people are very competitive, it drives them to great heights, and sometimes takes them to terrible lows. So much achievement has come from an inner need that you have to prove yourself. "Don't get rid of poverty, too much greatness has come from it" — Robert Frost.

While getting ahead, beating the competition, can make you feel good, that's a different game than love. We want to bring each other up, not climb on top of the other to get to farther up the ladder or try to prove our self-worth.

So if you are going to play a game with your loved ones, it is perhaps best to "change the rules." Playing games in the family had always been a disaster for me. I just cared too much about winning or doing well. Somehow in my subconscious, winning got tied to whether I was loved, or had worth in the family, in life. The drive that made me so good in competitive sports caused great angst and upset in the family. I didn't feel safe or secure if I wasn't winning.

Then one day I played Farkle, a dice game, with my partner, and I decided not to care who won. I don't know why that day, or that game was different, but something just shifted in me. I could just laugh and joke and not take the fickle of dice rolls and "the fog of war" personally. "When the student is ready, a teacher will appear."

A Soup of Competitiveness. I was watching Dancing with the Stars a few weeks back, and they asked each of the four finalists about winning, what it meant to them. To each, coming in first seemed like the only option, like it was the only thing in life that mattered. In a dance contest, where the contestants were not professional dancers??? Really???

The focus was to win. Yet, winning is out of our control. I get striving for mastery, or doing our best, or pushing ourselves to the limits, bringing out the best in my partner, gratitude for the opportunity to show what I've got, but having to win? That's a formula for sadness. Because three lost, and the fourth discovered what winning really means.

Many people think that if you are not trying to win, you won't perform well. And many people don't perform well if they have to win (they choke). And the goal of games is to win, but what if you don't win? It doesn't follow that you are a failure. And yet in our culture, it often does. We all swim in this soup of competitiveness.

Each of those four contestants on Dancing with the Stars danced better than they ever had in their lives. The competition pushed them to excel, but that journey is the victory, not winning a trophy that only one can have. And in case you missed the irony, it was built in. The winner was more famous than the person who came in second. In the end, it was a popularity contest, because the viewers got to vote. Dance got them to the finale, but the winning had to do with who was "a star" by being "The Bachelorette," and not purely on dance.

It's Not a Substitute. Maybe you want to play a competitive game, feel the thrill of victory, but today you are playing with the family. Don't try to make the family game into something it is not.

A hit with your partner, or family member, shouldn't be expected to fulfill the same stuff as your competitive game. To hold it to that standard is going to make everyone miserable, especially you.

A Pro's Life. One of the tough skills you have to have as a tennis pro is to play at all different levels. It's actually one of the hardest things to learn as you transition from being a competitive player. You have to be able to give your student the ball that they need, sometimes challenging, sometimes one for ego massage. You are not trying to win, but to help them grow, improve, get better. Sometimes I watch parents, often really good players, try to feed balls to their beginning 7-year-olds. This is not a skill you were born with, no matter how good of player you are. It is really tough, and not easy to do. You may be trying to help someone in your family, but feeding is learning a new skill too for you.

This is kind of what we have to do when we play with different people on our lives. There are people that we are competitive with, and there are people we play socially with, and then there is our family. These are different skills, and while all involve holding a racquet, and hitting a ball, they are not the same. It is challenging and takes practice. And especially difficult if you are the "better player" in the couple and can't even give them a good ball to hit. Be kind and gentle with yourself as you learn to play the different games of tennis. And it's fun to broaden your skills too.

Body Language. People are smart, and they want to know where they fit in. There are verbal messages and clues, but there is also what is unsaid but not unseen. Most people won't say, "you suck at tennis," but they may very well act like you do. Your serve goes in the net, and their shoulders drop. In fact, people often say one thing, and act like the other, so we get used to looking for the "truth" in the visual, rather than even hear what the verbal communication is.

And of course, we can misinterpret the body language too. Maybe their shoulders dropped because they released a deep breath in order to stay calm and loving as they feel your pain as you struggled with your serve. It's possible.

In Summary. We need to love and support the members of our household. Focus on the fun, and not the fundamentals. We may be better or worse, having a good day or a bad day, but we're still out there with the ones we love. That should be enough.

It's not easy, and you will make mistakes, I certainly have. Say the thing you shouldn't have said, or forget you are not out there with your competitive mates and have to step back. Take a deep breath. And then you can get back out there and love some more and hit a few more balls.

Not every match has to be about winning. You can make some competitive, and some for fun. For love, not luv.

Editorial:

A Thought

As I reflect on the Shelter in Place order of 12/4 over the past few weeks, sometimes the most obvious answers are missed at first glance.

We look at the particulars, the rules, the fine print, how some seem arbitrary, inconsistent, or not in line with what we have been told in the past. Like "tennis is safe," or "singles is safe," or "masks protect us," etc...

We try to find ways to still do the things we want to do, that we feel are safe, that our limited experience seems to tell us are safe ("I've been healthy every day since March 17th, therefore I'll be healthy tomorrow"). We are frustrated when the SIP rules don't allow this. They don't allow our freedom, they don't allow our tennis, our way, at our club.

Some have suggested we don't follow the rules. Or just the ones that allow us to do what we want. "Don't follow the stupid rules, just the good ones."

Then, some of our neighbors don't follow the rules. They are in direct violation of the health orders, which are the law. They don't seem to care, and others who do care, to some degree, look the other way. Few want to be a cop.

And then it hit me, what the health order is all about, the most obvious of answer: they want us to stay home.

Shelter-in-Place... the answer is right there.

Or bring our home to the court, but not to mix with other homes. They don't care what we think is safe, or even what is safe; stay at home. Don't get lost in the details, the big picture is enough. Society needs us to see the big picture.

Services are still provided, like lessons, and the ball machine, but in a very controlled environment, where strict rules are followed and enforced. This is allowed because the second part of this challenging pandemic situation is that we don't want to ruin the economy, and our society with it, to keep people safe. The economy has just as much to do with our well-being as our personal health. A collapse of our society must be avoided as well.

And there is the just reality. Our hospitals, the ICUs, are filling up, despite our best efforts to be safe and healthy. What we have been doing as a society is not keeping those numbers down. The numbers are bad.

If doubles are allowed, like last month, at a court change time like 10:30 a.m, there could be upwards of 30-40 different households represented at the Club, coming and going. If only singles would be allowed, it could be 15-20 households. With the new SIP rules (household only, lessons, ball machine) the number of households is probably 5 or less, 10 at max. That is a huge reduction in the number of people who can come in contact with other people.

The one thing that actually works, actually stops COVID, is staying out of contact with other people. Staying at home.

Exercise, being outside, breathing, is important to our physical and mental health. How can we accomplish this and not have too much mixing of households? That is what the order is about.

Since May, the members of Orindawoods have been very good about being safe, at least here at Club, what I can see. So, it feels very frustrating to be "punished" when we didn't do anything wrong. It's like being a teenager and you get grounded because your brother or sister stayed out half the night, while you were home in bed, following the rules. Your parents decide to be over safe, by grounding you too. But it does work (or encourage climbing out the window).

Certainly, there are other parts of society that have not done as well as Orindawoods, or even stood in defiance of any attempts at safety, being more concerned with the loss of freedom and personal liberty. Or income.

These are important considerations as well and should not be scoffed at. Our country is founded on such rights and has made it one of the greatest places to live in the world. People from all over have come here to join our way of life.

And yet, the cases rise, the hospitals fill up, the deaths rise, and most of us know someone who has been affected.

So, there is a balance, and the reality of what works, and what doesn't. It may seem unfair, unjust, undeserved, and certainly overkill, but it works. And "works" is good right now.

I like to remind myself in this dark night of the soul, that this order is only for a short time. That other countries have shut down in this way, and then been able to open up again. The virus surges, then recedes, and shutting down is the best weapon we have. The one that works. We just don't like it, don't want it, dread it. What about need it?

And finally, I remind myself that there is a vaccine on the way. You don't need to have read *All Quiet on the Western Front* to know not to blow it now, after doing so well, when hopefully a solution is near.

We can make it through this. We can delay our gratification, or at least modify our gratification for a short time, to help us all get to where we want to be. It's our journey. Together, and alone.