



# Orindawoods Tennis News

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*"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it"* – Celia, *As You Like It, Act II, Scene IV*

## **First Social of 2019**

### **Tulip Tournament**

Well, with all that rain we had this winter, there should be plenty of "tulips" ready to play some tennis this spring. Our annual Spring Season tennis opener is scheduled for April 14<sup>th</sup> this year. We will play tennis from 3-5 p.m, and then enjoy a pot-luck dinner on the deck starting around 5:15 p.m.. To register, contact Keith ([keith@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:keith@orindawoodstennis.com)), Lysbeth McNeill or John Bockman. We will be sending out food assignments at a later date. If there is a dish that you like to bring, let us know. Appetizer, salad, main course, dessert. Always tennis. Yum!

## **Club Style**

### **Bag Check**

We've all seen the pro version of bag check on TV. How about us? The veteran club player / warrior. What's in your tennis bag? Some ideas:

- I suppose your tennis racquet is primary. With a second racquet in case you break a string. Besides, it always looks cool to have two.

Then there are several accessories that are helpful / essential. The trick is to have what you need, when you need it. That means that much of the year, many of the times that you play, there is stuff "I don't need" today. But when you need it, it better be in there! The rest of the time, consider a full bag as weight training / conditioning. Here we go:

- Hat or visor
- Sunglasses
- Replacement overwrap or grip
- Sunscreen, lip balm, etc...
- First aid kit – band aids, athletic tape, pre-wrap, ice pack...
- Something to deal with hair – head band, hat, visor, ties, etc...
- Tennis towel, for those sweaty days
- Kleenex
- Contact solution / eye drops if you wear contacts
- Gloves for winter play
- Tennis mitten (hole for the racquet) for really cold mornings
- Water bottle (don't forget to add "water" – essential, or pointless).
- Sweat bands, head bands
- Spare sox
- Spare shirt (Is your opponent so good you need spare underwear?).
- Vest for winter play (key piece of equipment – trust me!)
- Ski cap (winter tennis – more livin' the dream).
- Key for the shed (ball machine club members)
- Phone charger (modern times require modern accessories).
- Shower sandals, flip flops
- Hot hands (hand warmers -- winter), cool cloth towel (summer)
- Snack – power bar, nuts, banana... to your taste.
- And yes, a can of balls (or two). You can't count on your foursome.
- Tape measure (measuring the net height – FYI 3 ft.).
- Not a bad idea to have some slightly used balls for warm up.

### **Some unique to my tennis manager's bag:**

- Tools to fix the ball machine: • Swiss Army Knife to fix nets, windscreens, etc; • Spare ball machine remote – oy vey!

## **Ball Machine Club 2019**

### **New Key for a New Shed**

March is registration month for the Ball Machine Club for the 2019 season (March '19-March '20). The cost is \$110 for the year for unlimited use, when the court is available. The ball machine can be used on court #3 before 9 a.m., and after 10:30 a.m. during the week (after 12 noon on the weekends). There are no ball machine reservations in the evening (but if the court is free, you may use the machine).

**Key:** With our new shed, we now have a new lock for the shed. We will be distributing the new key to the Ball Machine Club members for 2019.

### **Ball Machine Reminders:**

- Ball machine reservations are for 1 hr.
- LEAVE THE REMOTE, or bring it back!
- Great iPhone remote app available.
- Ball machine hours: before 9 a.m., after 10:30 a.m. (after 12 noon on weekends). No evening reservations. No Ball Machine during Prime time (M-F 9-10:30, Sat/Sun 9-12noon).
- If you are not going to use your reservation, please cancel it. Lots of people would love your spot.
- Please have the balls picked up by the end of your reservation time (don't cut into someone else's time). Pick up ALL the balls, by the way. Thanks!
- Put the machine away if it is late in the afternoon, or the weather is questionable.
- Lock the shed if you are the last one here in the afternoon. Many thanks!

### **Used Ball Drop**

Just inside the Club House, we have boxes available to place your old balls. We use these balls for the ball machine, and we also recycle the excess, which are cut up and used to build tennis courts. Thank you!

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

"Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations."



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So for sure, some of this stuff is seasonal, and you can switch it out with the seasons, but the point is, **when you need it, you want it in the bag!** Forgetting to put some piece of equipment back in for the Spring can be frustrating (and ultimately self-defeating) when the sun is right in our eyes!

What you don't need is 8 cans of used dead balls, weighing everything down more than necessary. Deposit those used balls in our used ball drop and lighten your load.

### Two Vastly Different Levels

## Knowledge and Belief

There is a significant difference between belief and knowledge. Or put another way, there is quite a difference between knowing what you want to do, and actually doing it. Especially under pressure (external or self-imposed). I have often said that knowing what to do is the first 10% of learning. Knowing is important, even essential, but by no means is the same as performing. With knowledge, you are on the right path, but performing is much farther down the road. If knowledge was enough, all those Monday morning, armchair quarterbacks would be playing in the NFL. And winning Super Bowls.

We often understand what to do right away, but it takes a long time to actually believe and do it under any kind of stress (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual).

**The secret** may be as simple as "just doing what you know." In other words, focusing on what you know. If you have learned the proper stroke, just do that. Easy pea-sy. When you believe in your stroke, and your commitment to doing it properly becomes more important than hitting the ball, hitting it in, keeping it away from the net person, hitting a winner, winning the point, winning the game, the match, the set, the league title, nationals, being #1, then you are ready to start actually making progress. That's right, when the form becomes paramount, then you will start to move (footwork) and adjust your timing, so that you can make the shot. And make the shot well. Form informs footwork, and timing. When you make the shots well, that gives you the best chance to win. You believe in your game, in what you are doing, and it starts to become a thing of faith, and of unconscious competence. Playing becomes automatic. This is belief, and this is where the best players live.

And yes, there are times when even great players have a crisis of belief. Maybe the desire to win creeps back in (Hey, it's the Wimbledon final after all), and they lose their focus on performance, on the little things that matter, and start to look for results. Results: the death of most belief, and the death of peak performance.

**Cult of Knowledge.** The problem for most of us in the twenty-first century is that knowledge and facts, information and science is so over-valued in our society. We think that if we know something, we have it down. And life is just a tiny, we-bit more difficult and complicated than that. At the same time, faith and belief have been way downplayed, often because of their connection to religion and their distance from hard science. But wisdom, intuition and belief (things that often can't be quantified or proven) are powerful tools that are essential to elite performance, and life.

**Hugely Unfair.** It is hugely unfair to hold your performance up to the standard of your knowledge. We do it all the time, and it is not helpful. Of course you "know" how to do the stroke, but you don't do it, so you often go on this tirade of self-condemnation that really just isn't even the slightest bit fair. Knowledge just isn't what matters (more than 10%). If you miss the down the line passing shot in a match, it isn't fair to give yourself a hard time just because you know what you are supposed to do to make it. Only if you are consistently making shots under pressure, do you have any right to even attempt them. Or complain about errors. Even practice and a match are wildly different, until they are not (belief). Good luck out there!

### The Mental Game:

## Tale of Two shots

Often when I play, I'm faced with a dilemma. What shot to hit? And I don't mean cross court, or down the line, through the middle or over their head. What I mean is once that choice has been made, do I play 1) The shot you can do with ideal form and make, or 2) a shot that is faster, harder, that will cause them to miss, but I could also miss too.

We can see the logic here: "If I hit a tougher shot, they may miss. If I play safe, just get it in, they may get it back. If they get it back, I could lose the point." But the logic is incomplete. It is true they may miss more often, but only if I can make

the shot. If I miss first, they win. They don't have to do a thing. There are corollaries to this idea, like if I don't hit a strong shot, they will put it away. These beliefs are often erroneous. We are not being completely honest.

**The Keys to Victory.** In dealing with this dilemma, it helps me to think of what actually works, in terms of winning a doubles match. I would say that there are a couple of behaviors that statistically correlate very closely with success. They are 1) a high percentage of first serves in. 2) Get as many returns back in play as possible. 3) Don't miss volleys. The fourth is more strategic. 4) the team that controls the middle controls the match.

<b>Weekly Lessons</b>	
<b>Hit and Fit:</b> <i>TRX workout (strength and stretching) &amp; tennis drills using the Playmate ball machine.</i>	
Friday 10:30-12 noon	\$20
Saturday 7:30-9 a.m.	\$20
<b>Tuesday Ladies' Clinic:</b> Tuesdays at 9:30	
	\$5
<b>Thursday Men's Clinic:</b> 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.	

Teaching legend Vic Braden used to say, "Hit the ball in, because statistically speaking they are about to miss (the average point lasts only 3.5 shots)." Craig O'shannessy backs that up with modern match statistics. Points are short. Mistakes are plentiful.

As much as we celebrate the great shot in tennis (match highlights on TV), the truth is, tennis is primarily a defensive game. The pros may hit the ball very hard, but the successful ones only hit it as hard as they can keep it in. In fact, that is a good working definition for the top player, the player who can hit the ball they want the fastest and keep it in. Their "rally ball" is better than everyone else's. Never forget, you may force an error just by keeping it in.

When we choose the too forceful shot, we are trying to affect the outcome by hitting a winner or forcing an error. This is not a bad concept, in the right circumstances. But our tools or vision for doing this may be too limited. Sure, we can force an error by hitting harder, but also by placement, change of speed, spin and deception or disguise. Maybe one of these other options doesn't cause us to

miss the shot. In other words, we can force the play, and still play a shot we know we can make. Only take shots you can make.

The temptation is always to go bigger, and heck, it's fun to hit winners, but is that really playing tennis? In the movie Molly's Game, Molly Bloom is accused of running an illegal game of chance, to which she replies, "Poker isn't a game of chance, it's a game of skill." Tennis should be a game of skill too, not a game of chance.

Sure, anything can happen on the next point. Not my business. What is my business is this choice: hit my best stroke with good form, within my ability, or over hit and face the consequences (sometimes good, usually bad).

## Focus of Our Attention

We tend to get what we focus on or ask for. If you take the time to do the stroke right, you tend to have good strokes. If you worry about just hitting the ball, the tendency will be to hit the ball, but often not use the proper stroke. The skill is to train your mind, your emotions, your belief, to do the proper stroke. This trait is often referred to as will. Having the will power to do what is in your long-term best interest. Focus: on process, instead of results.

This is challenging. When I return serve, and someone serves it hard, with a lot of spin, to the corner, the overriding temptation is to just make contact. But merely placing the strings on the ball is often going to cause a collision that results in the ball flying off to some undesirable location. To control the ball, I need to spin it, and aim a bit too. That requires overcoming my mere desire for contact and instead focusing on doing the stroke. Ask, "If I made contact, would it go in?"

On the serve, I often have the plan to toss the ball up while bending my knees, drive my legs up while dropping the racquet back down my back, loop the racquet around to outside the ball, then raise my elbow, extend my arm, internally rotate my shoulder, drive my left elbow down and in, while my right shoulder raises up, grabs the ball and slings it up, over the net and then finish my pronation, land on my left foot first, Then right foot, and recover for the next shot. But what often happens is I toss the ball up and all I hear in my head is "OMG Hit the @#%\$&^%\$% ball!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" That's a problem, and a huge challenge.

One of the mysteries of life is that when you stay calm, and move slowly, you "have more time" and when you rush, everything seems fast and there is "no time." So strange as it seems, if we will ourselves to move slowly, and work our way through the steps deliberately, with presence and focus, time does seem to slow down. In a sport where things seem to happen too fast, having more time would be a huge advantage. For the most part, pro tennis players are a pretty cool, calm lot. There is some fist pumping from time to time, but during play, emotions are controlled, so that beliefs can claim the day.

## The Essential

*"What is essential is invisible to the eye." – Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

In *The Little Prince* Saint-Exupery was of course, talking about seeing with the heart (the soul), but much of what is important in tennis (in addition to heart and soul), is invisible to the eye. It's invisible because it is happening so fast. "The hand is quicker than the eye," any magician will tell you. So much about the study and teaching of tennis has changed with the advent of high speed film, followed by computer generated body mapping.

We can slow the action down, and see what is really happening, instead of just relying on feel and guess work. Of course, feel and intuition are important in learning, but only in combination with the knowledge of what you need to do.

There is a little move, right before contact, that is essential to playing a ball really well, and it happens so quickly, that the human eye can barely see it, if at all. The well-trained eye can see the evidence that it happened: a great contact.

**What is this move?** On the forehand, it is an external rotation of the shoulder inside a larger core rotation moving forward, that moves the racquet head back, down and inside the contact point right before the ball arrives. You see this move with top players. To the naked eye, this kind of looks like a wrist move. But it is an external shoulder rotation. When the shoulder can no longer rotate back farther, the ball arrives and is caught by the strings. What quickly follows is an internal shoulder rotation driving the ball and then a release as the ball slips off the strings, rolling towards its target.

It is the external rotation of the shoulder, this catch of the ball, that allows the very best players to get the very most out of the three phases of contact: catch, drive and release. They can momentarily hold the ball, the strings digging into the felt and grabbing the ball, before driving it and releasing it. Due to the racquet approaching the ball from this low inside position, this indirect connection allows the strings to hold the ball and roll it.

**And Power Too.** When the shoulder folds back like this, the muscles are stretched past their natural position, like a rubber band being stretched. Then they contract and shorten very quickly. This is called the stretch shorten cycle in biomechanics. If you can time this to happen right as the ball arrives and sits on the strings, the ball will be slung forward with incredible pace as you shift your weight, drive and then release the ball.

**What Break Downs:** If the player doesn't make this little dip and roll with the shoulder, the racquet head moves forward too soon, hits the ball too directly, too early and there is very little catch of the ball. The ball will rebound off the strings too quickly, with very little spin (it will bounce, not roll) and will be away before any chance to release the ball properly (with spin, with roll).

**Backhand.** On the one-handed backhand, it is an internal rotation of the front shoulder that drops the racquet back, down, inside and under the ball just before it arrives. Then drive with the body (straighten up) as the ball sits on the strings and then is released away as the shoulder externally rotates and the racquet accelerates. Two-handed would be like the forehand in the back shoulder, the one-handed backhand in the front shoulder.

**Serve.** On the serve, when the racquet drops down the back the shoulder externally rotates (moves out to the right), then the arm extends but the racquet remains on the outside of the ball until the arm straightens, then the shoulder internally rotates (back to the left for right handers) and catches the ball, drives it and flings (release) the it over the net, then down into the court. It is a throw (hold and release) rather than a hit (two objects colliding).

**Reminders:** Things happen fast right before contact. It's so easy to lose focus, perhaps have a slight panic or black out, and just whack the ball. There are thoughts and feelings that we can focus on that help us not lose our minds (literally: let our emotions take over and sabotage what we know). Here are a couple of ideas that really help me. 1) Think of catching the ball, rather than hitting it. Receiving is a backwards motion, just like what we are describing, whereas hitting is a forward motion, not what we want too soon. 2) Relax, drop the racquet under the ball. 3) watch the lower, inside portion of the ball as it approaches you, as opposed to the whole ball, or the back of the ball. 4) do your form, low inside to high outside, no matter what. Good luck out there!

## Spring Junior Program 2019

The 2019 Spring Junior Clinics begins the week of **April 8<sup>th</sup>**, and will continue thru the week of **May 27<sup>th</sup>**. No classes during spring break, April 1-7<sup>th</sup> The 8-week program will be led by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson. FYI:** Summer clinics start 6/10

<u>Level</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>	<u>One day/week</u>	<u>Two Days / week</u>
I	<b><u>Lil' Ones</u></b>	<b>Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm</b>	<b>\$112*</b>	<b>\$175*</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>			
II	<b><u>Future Stars Group</u></b>	<b>Tuesdays 4-5:30pm</b>	<b>\$205*</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>			
III	<b><u>Tennis Development Group</u></b>	<b>Thursdays 4-5:30pm</b>	<b>\$205*</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>			
IV	<b><u>Tournament Training Group</u></b>	<b>Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm</b>	<b>\$260*</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>			