



Orindawoods Tennis News

October 2023

Vol: 29, Issue 10

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

Twilight Tennis

Orindawoods 50th Anniversary Tennis Party

We had sixty members come out for the Oktoberfest Twilight to celebrate all that is Orindawoods Tennis Club on October 1st. About 35 played tennis for two hours. Followed by a filet mignon and chicken feast on the deck. It was great fun, and a great occasion to remember 50 years of your amazing Club. Thanks to Cindy, Brad, John and all those that helped with the occasion. Woo Hoo OW!!!

Orindawoods Junior Championships

The Orindawoods Junior Championships will be held the weekend of **October 20th - 22nd** at the Club. ALL COURTS.

For Club Members: All courts will be used for this event through at least midday on Sunday, depending on the weather. Plan your weekend tennis accordingly. Thank you for supporting junior tennis at Orindawoods and in Contra Costa County by donating our courts for one weekend each year. Most clubs in the area do the same, which allows the juniors of Contra Costa County and beyond to have a welcoming, introductory junior tennis circuit to play in all year long. Many kids have gone from this platform to be top players in high school and beyond. Juniors are the future of tennis. Thanks!

For Juniors and Parents: If you have a junior that would like to participate, Head Pro Erik or ETD Keith can help with the registration. You sign up and pay for the tournament on the norcaluspta.topdoglive.com site. This is an entry level tournament for competition, but not for beginning players. These juniors have been playing tennis for a few years, seriously in a junior program or lessons, at least, and can serve well, and rally, before taking on the tournament scene. This is intended to be an introduction, or a bit of a soft landing, before moving on to more competitive USTA Junior events, if the junior wants to take that path. Or they can just enjoy some fun play with local kids, to expand their tennis horizons.

Junior Tennis:

Winter Junior Program

Head Pro Erik's amazing junior program continues this winter, starting the week of Nov. 13th. Our Fall program was full, and the most successful in Club history. So many juniors are learning and enjoying the game of tennis here at the Club under Erik and our staff's fine tutelage. It's a great place for juniors to learn and grow your game of tennis. See Page 8 for all the details.

Pool Closes as the End of October

Thanks for a great pool season! The pool will close Monday, 10/30.

Thoughts on Keeping it Real

Navigating life, navigating tennis. We must work on our overall skills, be the best we can be, not guess, or plan for specifics, but go slow, take our time, see what is happening, and do what is appropriate in the moment. We can't know or predict accurately

2023 Club Rates

Tennis Lessons with Keith & Erik:

1/2 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 Playday

Weds	5:30-7	no fee
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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 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:

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."
— Howard Thurman

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what will be in advance, even just a second or so from now. We trick ourselves into believing that predicting the future this is better, “pretending to know” (guessing” or “anticipating”). It’s less stressful. But our best guess is a bit off. We need to take effective action, to respond to reality, not to an estimate. And reality is a moving target, ever changing, never the same. Reality mocks forecasts (watch any pregame show AFTER the game and laugh -- they didn’t have a clue). Like weather reports, they indulge our “need to know, even if it is wrong,” like a drug.

We don’t want to re-act (run a preplanned program that is not specific to what is right now -- unique to this moment in time). Like telling the same story to different people at a cocktail party, rather than connect with each individual in a meaningful way. Each point in tennis is beautiful and unique too. Don’t miss it, thinking you are seeing the same thing. Respond to each ball or situation. They’re all different.

Often, we think we know the answers for ourselves, or for others. Truthfully, we don’t know, and we aren’t prepared. Wait with openness, with kindness. Be OK (openness and kindness). Take it all in, and respond, knowing God (life, spirit, nature, the universe -- chose the word or philosophy that works for you) will give us the wisdom, and tools we need (second voice) specific to this moment. It is counterproductive to play God (try to control). That’s far above our pay grade.

And there are always situations, like a ball hit hard at us, or loneliness [illness, money problems, loss, the future, etc], that we feel we can’t handle, and tempt us to guess or try to control, and that control or prediction is an illusion. It can’t possibly be right (because in advance, the problem or challenge hasn’t even fully presented itself – until the ball bounces, we don’t know where we are going to contact the ball). Even if we correctly guess it’s coming to my forehand, or the solution [to loneliness] is a man or woman, ... those “answers” still leaves us with, “Which one of millions?” On the forehand side, there are literally millions of ways the ball can be over there, all different than any forehand you have played before. And even if we guess that one and a million shot, when we guess, we most likely will move too soon and arrive early, out of rhythm, not appropriate.

To wait for reality. It is so hard to have the faith, the belief, to trust (in ourselves, as well as the world), not to guess at the answer or the plan. We think that doing something -- even if it is ALWAYS wrong -- is better than waiting for reality.

Really???This is wonky thinking. We think this one time, even though it has NEVER happened before in our entire lives, that I will guess right (win the lotto).

Life is easy if we wait, the answer is revealed, but living it easy is hard.

We’re surrounded by temptation. Which really shouldn’t be tempting because it’s always wrong. It doesn’t work. But we are tempted and often succumb, still.

Fear gets to us. Gets the better of us. That, combined with our thinking that “we know what is best” (for us, our partner, our kids) traps us in pain, in hell. We don’t even know the full situation until it manifests, but we guess, to release tension, momentarily. Short term gain, long term pain (long term in tennis can be in about 2 seconds – when your ball crashes into the net). Guessing is always wrong. Avoid tension? Come on, what could be more tense than always being wrong? Being wrong because we couldn’t wait for what was to be revealed.

How do we break free? Wisdom: “You will miss, and there is no need to miss.” - Tim Galloway.

Grace, and opportunity, every shot, every decision, every moment. Let the situation play out, trust yourself, let go, listen for the wisdom that will come, if we are not so self-distracted by what we “know.” There is freedom and empowerment in not having to be right. Often, we don’t even know what we don’t know. Your anxiety screams “OMG, hit it!” If you let that go, wait and observe, a quiet, calm, but deep second voice says, “Go down the line, my [son or daughter].” “Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be, there will be an answer, let it be” - Paul

USPTA World Conference Highlights

Keith attended the USPTA World Conference 9/24-9/28. Here are some of the highlights, including a great panel with former players from other sports, and an informative talk with Chris Evert. There were many great sessions from nutrition to doubles strategy, how use the “old style” in today’s game, sport psychology, new products, management, creative events, doubles, singles, how to get out of tennis trouble, ... it goes on and on. I get so much from attending these kinds of gatherings, that have really helped me with managing the club, and teaching over all these years.

Sunday 9/24

Medicine Ball to Tennis Ball Richard Woodroof

A four-hour specialty course on training for tennis. Footwork, strength, speed, working with injuries. A few highlights: No such thing as injury prevention, there is pre-hab as well as rehab. The better shape you are in, the better you deal with injuries. Athletes always have injuries. How bad, and how long it takes to recover are the important issues.

Work 3 to 1 on the deceleration muscles (generally the back side of the body). Most tennis injuries are in the deceleration phase, slowing down after accelerating and contact. Rotator cuff tear would be an example, the forward motion pulling the arm out of the shoulder socket vs the back muscles trying to keep the arm in the shoulder where it belongs. Exercises for the deceleration muscles: rows, walking backwards, working hamstrings, glutes, back muscles. We swing forward, run forward all day, we can go from 0-60 in 3 seconds, can we brake or do we breakdown?

As we age, what we lose first is our ability to stop and change direction, not our ability to go forward.

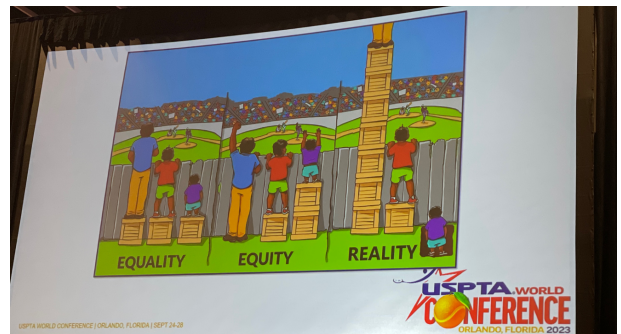
Women suffer more ACL injuries than men. Women have wide hips, and wide feet but narrow knees. Men's hips, knees and feet are more in a straight line. Women need to strengthen the outsides of their hips and legs to support their knees. Fortunately, women do not hurt their ACLs in tennis nearly as much as other sports, like soccer, where ACL injuries are an epidemic.

Monday 9/25

Dr. Oluwaferanmi Okanlami

"Disability is not inability." Dr. O is an amazing speaker, and so compelling. I have seen him speak to the USTA as well. With all the great things that he says as an advocate for people with disabilities, the most powerful statement that he made was this: "As a black man from Nigeria growing up in America, I was the son of two doctors, and went to the best schools in the land. I ran track for Stanford, went to medical school at Michigan and then Yale. I never felt discriminated against until during my third year at Yale, when I broke my neck in a swimming accident. Until then, I felt my intelligence and education would allow me to enter any door in society. Suddenly, confined to a wheelchair, doors were closed. I felt, in a way I had never felt before, how limited access made me, and so many others, locked outside of society."

Since then, Dr. O has been an advocate for access for all. One example was that he couldn't go back to operating, to his profession without a special chair that allows him to stand during the operation. Until someone invented that standing wheelchair and provided it, he was discriminated against as a doctor and couldn't do his job. Dr. O used a couple of cartoons to make his point. The final slide (not pictured) showed one of the boxes converted to a ramp for a wheelchair. He believes a society needs to give people the boxes they need to be part of society.



Tuesday 9/26

Tara Collingwood gave a talk on nutrition and specifically for athletes. The key points were athletes need carbs on heavy workout days, always protein, and lots of water, and don't forget when you hydrate to include salt. Most sports drinks don't have enough salt for players that sweat a lot. Hydration is the most important part of nutrition for athletes. You lose function before you even get thirsty, just 2% loss is enough to lead to cramps and reduced function. Some people sweat more than others, so know your own body. Sodium helps you keep more water in your body. If you just drink water or fluids with no sodium, you are diluting the sodium, and you retain less.

You must take care of yourself after you play. Fluids and carbs within 30 minutes of stopping, Protein within 2 hours. Sleep is very important as well, 7-9 hours a night.

Finally, one that applies to all of us, if you need to gain weight, then eat something late in the evening before you go to bed (For the rest of us: if you don't want to gain weight, it's a good idea not to eat in the late evenings).

Celebrity Panel

Paul Taglianetti NHL, member of Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh Penguins

William Floyd NFL Football, member of 49ers, Florida State

Frank Nobilo, world class Kiwi golfer and TV announcer

USPTA Chief Executive Officer John Embree (a damn good "talk show host") interviewed a panel of former successful pro athletes about their careers, the influence of their coaches, best coaching, worst coaching, role models, and their insights into their sports, and sports in general. This was excellent, and very enjoyable. There were common themes with tennis, youth tennis, parenting, coaching and pro tennis, of course. Some highlights:

FN: “How do you tell a levelheaded New Zealander? They have a chip on each shoulder. It’s the tough times, the things that got to you, that made you mad, that make you better. The things you learn from. I’m thankful for everyone one of those mean comments that in the long run, motivated me to work hard and get better.”

PT: “A good coach knows who to the team they can yell at, and who needs to be puffed up. I was the one they could yell at. It worked great for the other guys, no one else wanted to be me.”

JE: “Your greatest coaching advice?”

FN: “Someone must help you to see your own movie. When things are going bad, they need to help you see the big picture. Your career is something that you look back on, not something you determine is a success or a failure when you are in the middle of it. Remind them of what is going right, when all they can see what is going wrong.”

JE: “What about teaching young kids?”

PT: “A skate is very narrow. Hard to balance, hard to move. You must know how to skate to play hockey. Don’t just put a puck out on the ice and let the beginner kids play. They don’t know how to skate. You must teach them how to skate. Technical, over, and over, until they can skate properly. How to skate with a stick too, with one hand, you don’t skate (or run) naturally with two hands on the stick. Each move needs to become instinctive, if it not, it’s back to drilling. A camp that is just about playing is taking [the parent’s] money and not teaching anything.”

JE: “Your great coaching role models?”

WF: “Bobby Bowden, he led by example. He expected you to be a man. Bill Walsh was about attention to detail.”

JE: “Why don’t you coach?”

PT: “I hate the [hockey] parents. They haven’t played at that level, don’t understand the game. Their acting out in the stands [fist fights, yelling at the players, coaches], makes their kid look bad.”

JE: “What was a good coaching moment?”

WF: I blew out my knee in my second NFL season. I was in the hospital, and I was scared I would never play again. The running backs coach for the 49ers came in and I asked, “Is it over?” The coach replied in a routine air, “Yeah, you’re out for the season [not your career]”

JE: “Frank, you played an individual sport [golf], like tennis. In tennis we have some problems with line calls and bad behavior. How come there is very little cheating in golf?”

FN: “It starts with the rule book, you count your own strokes. You are given responsibility and are expected to be responsible. Then you usually play with adults when you are a junior coming up, and they teach you to respect the game. And if anyone sees you fudging, you get a talking to. When I came up, the pro locker room was set up alphabetically, my last name starts with an N, Jack Nicholas was right next to me. He was 50 years old, still playing on the tour. You learn to respect the game.”

JE: “What about the leaders in the locker room?”

PT: The superstars are not the ones that do the talking. Others are the big talkers in the locker room. Stars lead more by example. Mario Lemieux never said a word. One of the greatest players ever. [We got the message].

Wednesday 9/27

Chris Evert

Well-known tennis writer **Steve Flink** interviewed **Chris Evert**. A fascinating discussion. From 1974 to 1986, Chris won at least one major (often she only played 2 or 3 of the 4). Her most proud achievement was that she won 90% of her career matches, a record that still stands. She talked about her rivalries, starting with Evonne Goolagong. She played Evonne in Ft. Lauderdale, Chris’ hometown, and the whole crowd was rooting for Evonne. Everyone one loved Evonne. That challenged Chris’ mental toughness. And then against Martina Navratilova, who she started out dominating, then losing 13 matches in a row for over 2.5 years, and then evened out the match results for the last part of their rivalry. Navratilova finished 43-37 in her favor. A very long and classic tennis rivalry. Chris explained that she was so stubborn that even when Martina owned her for 13 matches in a row, she wouldn’t change her strategy, despite her coach Dennis Ralston pleading with her to come into the net more. He pointed out that Martina didn’t have much of a pass on her slice backhand side. Finally, match 14, Chris tried, Martina’s first pass went in the bottom of the net. The next time in, an easy volley. She won the match. Chris adapted, and the rivalry became much more even after that. And of course, they became best of friends. But Chris said that wasn’t possible for a while, especially when

Martina started winning most of the time. Chris felt emotionally she had to pull back. She said it was very hard to play people she was close to, and the three times professionally she had to play Jennie (her sister) were hell.

Chris was known for her good sportsmanship, and total self-control, but she said that came at a cost, and there were years of counseling after she retired. So, she stressed that people were different, and that some people were just not going to be as calm as her, and even for her, it was at a huge cost. We are meant to express our emotions.

Chris was famous for comebacks, and she said it was largely due to her focus. A focus that came out of necessity, she shared. She was not as good of athlete as many of her rivals, and so she had to bear down on every single point while more gifted players would drift a bit. "Evonne was brilliant, but at some point, she would always go on a walkabout." Necessity trained Chris to focus when others were distracted by "winning or losing," or other things.

Then there was one of those great Evert insights, that are not spoken often enough when she commentates on TV but are worth the wait: "You can win two games a set if you expose an opponent's weakness."

She talked about her parents, her dad, Jimmy Evert one of the great teachers of all time, and her mom, the perfect balance, not that into tennis, but always into being a supportive mom, who would talk about the beautiful garden flowers along the drive to the Wimbledon final.

Finally, they talked about her Academy, which Chris runs with her brother John. How teaching and mentoring means so much to her, and which came as a surprise. It took John two years to talk her into doing it, but she is so grateful.

She said that it really bothers her how much attention the latest coach [top player] has on TV, when they have only been coaching the player for a few months, while there was a developmental pro that taught that player the fundamentals for 10-15 years to get them to that place. She finished her "USPTA Hall of Fame" speech with "The teaching pros are the caretakers, the guardians, and the backbone of tennis." It was a nice thing to say and to hear.

Thursday, 9/28

On Thursday, we all got on buses and headed over to the USTA National Campus. An amazing facility that has 28 hard court, 32 clay courts, six indoor courts and pickleball, thirty-six-foot junior courts and Padel courts. An amazing facility.

Dale Evans, former USPTA NorCal president, and currently Tennis Director of the Billie Jean King Tennis Center (home of the US Open) gave a talk about the transition zones in tennis, going to the net. The two key skills were recognizing a ball that could be attacked and taking time away from your opponent. There were drills to practice and execute all the mid-court skills and drills.

While coming to the net is not the primary pattern of play in tennis today, there are plenty of opportunities when it should be employed. Dale stressed that you do your primary pattern 75% of the time, but you need to sense "when she is wounded" and attack. Look at what Chrissie figured out about Martina's slice backhand above.

Rita Gladstone is the head 10 and under coach at the USTA national campus. Rita cited a George Washington University study where the kids were asked what makes tennis fun? The six main factors were 1) match play, 2) positive coaching, 3) Learning, 4) Working hard, 5) Staying active and 6) sportsmanship. Rita's lesson plan took all these factors in to mind. She also stressed exercises where kids were encouraged to throw a ball properly, with two fingers and the arm rotating.

USTA has 36 certified pros at the national campus, most are full time, and are teaching over 500 kids per week.

Tour of USPTA World Headquarters

Executive Director John Embree gave us all a tour of the USPTA headquarters located in the same development as the USTA National Campus. It is a wonderful building. It is one of the most environmentally respectful buildings I have ever been in. It is the first building in Orlando to have solar, which saves 50% on electricity. There are almost no permanent walls made with sheet rock. All the walls can be moved around, to reconfigure offices and spaces. It has a lovely board room, video production center, and there is a garage with a golf cart to take supplies back and forth to the National Campus. The bathrooms have locker rooms, so employees can play tennis or go for a run, and then change, shower and go to work. All the electronic cables are suspended from the ceilings in baskets, rather in the walls, so they can be serviced easily, and replaced with new technology when necessary. A beautiful board room and reception area for hosting events. A great building.

John has been running USPTA for 12 years, and it was great to say thank you, and best of luck in his retirement.

Final Impressions:

Crazy flights, delays and weather going through New York to get back from Orlando (rain delays, locked on the plane, then locked out of the terminal, missed flights, mis bookings and an Angel that saved the day), but the trip was informative and a good refresh. It energizes me for the fall and new year. I found the celebrity panel a real inspiration, as well and the insights from Chris Evert. I often find Chris frustrating as an announcer, but when she talks tennis, and her tennis experience, she is very charming, informative, and occasionally brilliant. (Note: I still remember all those years ago Chris commentating: "It's easy know where to hit the ball in tennis, the hard [relevant] part is can you do it")

Control and Energy

When we play tennis, we need to control the ball, but we must send it over the net as well. Keeping the ball “in play” works up to a point, but there comes a time when 1) where you hit it, 2) how hard, 3) what kind of spin, and 4) how deceptive you are, takes you up the rungs of the ladder towards tennis excellence.

Two Parts, Two Moves. If the stroke can be divided into before contact and after contact, first phase, second phase, or receiving and sending, then it becomes interesting when we apply these concepts of control and energy. We watch tennis on TV, like the US Open last month, and we are impressed by all the power, but of course, you can only play the ball as fast as you can get it in. And speed is not the only weapon, as mentioned above. Anyone who has gone out there for the first time to try tennis (all of us, some many years ago, a distant memory) has found out that hitting it hard isn't that difficult, it is “the getting it in part” that is challenging. So, if we are smart, want to have fun, and like to win, we quickly go to focusing on control, at least to some degree. It's very common in amateur tennis to see players that are focused on control playing against players that are focused on energy (power). So, we have players that are control / control (before and after contact) and we have players that are energy / energy (before and after contact). Well, tennis, being a control game, it's usually the control / control folks that win these matches. In my hometown Rec Park club, it was “Bob the Lob” who had most of the trophies. The energy / energy approach leads to most of the winners and most of the errors. And poor results.

The problem for the control / control folks is when they start to get better and play players that can combine energy and control. Of course, they want to do that too, but the point is, the old control / control model isn't going to work. But adding energy is a bit complicated, or as they say, “everyone would do it.”

We all have scars from those first few times out on a tennis court, when our ball was flying over the fence. It is scary to add energy. For me, I remember it taking a couple of years before I really felt like I could start putting the ball where I wanted on a consistent basis. This is the intriguing part of learning tennis. It's difficult, takes a lot of time and work, but it is not impossible. And there is just enough success, to keep you coming back. Sports that are harder, say golf and baseball, often get too frustrating, except for the true devotee, and people leave those games. Other sports are too easy, and are picked up for a while, especially if they are popular, everyone is playing ____, but then interest is lost, as it is not that challenging.

The trouble is, that when players start to add energy, they tend to think of energy first. “I want to hit harder.” “I want to have a more powerful shot.” That is, they start the stroke with “more energy” as the center of their focus, wish and desire, and then remember, “oh no! I must get this in” and revert to control. Thus, they have an energy / control stroke (before and after contact).

An energy / control stroke means that right at contact, they are slowing down to control the ball, which makes some sense for control (“seemed like a good idea at the time”). Unfortunately, that is deceleration. The exact opposite of what you do if you want to add energy, which is to accelerate. $\text{Force} = \text{mass} \times \text{acceleration}$.

Contrast this with the masters of the game. Elite players start with control (receiving, coordinating, aiming) and then once everything is aligned (prepare, watch the ball, move your feet), only then, do they think about adding energy. The most useful energy in tennis doesn't come from swinging (momentum, movement, that's not control), or strength, or even speed, but from acceleration, that is, releasing, letting go.

Toss. Move your racquet as if you were going to toss the racquet over the net, just remember at the last moment to hold on (lightly). As your hand reaches forward to catch the ball (control / receiving) the racquet head trails behind (laid back wrist). When you get to the end of your reach, but you are loose, the arm will roll. This stopping of the arm and rotating from the shoulder, (exactly what you naturally do when your arms swing when you are walking or running) will propel the head of the racquet past the hand and out towards the target. Contact is made with the ball right about the time the racquet head is passing the hand (and thus the strings pointed forward, towards the target. After contact, the hand / wrist ends in full extension. This is acceleration, just like when a car stops suddenly (your hand in this case) and the passengers (racquet head, not handle) go flying forward, fortunately restrained by the seat belts or air bags in a collision (your arm stays attached to your shoulder and doesn't come off – see strengthening deceleration muscles).

As a side note, this is why it is important to work on strengthening your back (rowing exercises are best), so that your shoulder can deal with the force of releasing your arm forward and the ensuing stop and roll.

Problem Solving. The rolling the arm of course adds force / acceleration (torque) to the shot, but it also makes the recovery smoother and less of a strain on your arm (if you just stopped cold and didn't follow-through):

Quick Fixes: So, you try a shot, and you miss. What was the problem?

Part One: Did you not line it up / coordinate well enough? Did you mis-time it? Did you not aim properly? These are all issues with the control part of the stroke. So, you need to slow down. Don't move until you see where you are going, keep the racquet “out in front” and move slowly to the ball, at a speed you can feel what is going on. Common tips you hear addressing this problem are: “watch the ball,” “move your feet,” “keep your head down.”

Part Two: If you feel that you have done all that preparation (part one), and the shot lacks power (perhaps dies in the net or goes over weakly), then you need to release better, the energy part of the stroke. Keep the racquet very loose in your hand, and feel like you are tossing it, or letting go as you play the ball. This is the energy phase. Common tips you hear for this are: “follow through,” “release,” “let go.”

While the common tips are almost universal in the tennis lexicon, they are perhaps a bit too general, not specific enough. But once you understand what they represent (receiving skills or sending skills) then they can be helpful reminders that lead to success, joy, and happiness.

Sometimes we mess up both the before and after contact phases (control / energy) but most times, it is one or the other. There are no mistakes, only lessons. The sole purpose of post-shot analysis should be to help you make the next shot (not self-condemnation, and ego defense, as often practiced: “I coulda been somebody, I coulda been a contender... now I’m a bum” – Brando, *On the Waterfront*).

Most Errors. It is interesting to note that most problems with the energy phase (not releasing, not “following through”) are due to not doing the control phase well enough. In other words, we are not going to release the racquet if we are still trying to find the ball. We’re mentally trekking back down memory lane to our tennis childhood trauma (early days of playing) and seeing the ball flying out of control (over the fence). We are only going to release to the degree that we feel safe the ball will go in, and this is dependent on lining the shot up, and thus feeling in control.

Surprisingly to the less accomplished player, most problems with the control phase (the first phase) is starting too soon (moving before you know where you are going), moving the racquet too fast (either chasing the ball, or trying to add power before the ball is even there). Both of those lead to slowing the racquet down, and an energy / control stroke, rather than control / energy, the style of the elite player.

It’s Universal. I was taking a yoga class the other day, and the instructor echoed what I often say in teaching tennis, and in particular, the control phase. She said about the yoga move, “Go slow, [and the next time] go even slower.” I smiled, and said, “That’s tennis!”

In the control phase, it is near impossible to go too slow. Of course, this is counter intuitive to the common understanding of power (“I need to move”), but this is due to a misunderstanding of force. Force doesn’t come from going fast, or being strong, but from being weak (loose) and going slow, and then speeding up at just the right time (tossing, letting go).

“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

When I became [an adult], I put the ways of childhood behind me.”

One of the challenges in our growth as a tennis player is “to leave our [tennis] childhood (beginner) ways behind.” When starting out, it makes so much sense to [over] focus on our limited understanding of control (control / control). It’s all we know, but when we do the first control phase properly, to maximize energy we need to let go. There is no reason not to let go, to go to energy, in the second phase. This is optimal. But this takes a lot of courage, as we have learned to be / play it, safe (often for many years to get to the point where our control phase is good enough to really consider letting go with any chance of success). And the ultimate irony is, which relatively few players come to learn in practice, is that safe (control / control) isn’t safe.

The big surprise, is that energy -- letting go -- actually increases your control (safety) through the use of spin. So, when I do the energy phase properly, letting go and rolling the arm, the racquet head rolls around the ball, and spin is produced. Spin is the primary tool (after ever-present gravity) for keeping the ball in play. For elite players, perhaps only 1-2% of the people that play tennis, they get more control the better they release, that is, the more they let go, the more acceleration they permit to happen. In a sense they hit harder to keep the ball in, but of course, there is nothing hard about it. So, you get the counterintuitive feeling that the easier you hit, the more powerful your shots. And you don’t miss. Here’s where I’d be doing a happy dance.

The Key Question. Bret Hobben changed my life (and career) over 25 years ago at a USPTA convention with the following question. “1) Do the best players in the world do [a skill] because they are the best athletes and players and only they can do it, or 2) are they best players and athletes in the world because they do [that skill]?”

How you answer that question, is going to severely impact your future in the game. So much of tennis and tennis teaching is dumbed down to make it easier for people to learn (and thus installing a glass ceiling that limits them to mediocrity). “There is an easy way to learn, that is hard to play, and there is a hard way to learn, that is easy to play.” - Doug King. I think most of us, when we look at our long-term interests, want to be able to play (and play better). But often, in the short-term, we fall into doing something that is easier, thinking tomorrow I will do the harder thing, and I must tell you, as the Credence song goes, “Someday never comes.” The future is now. And #2 is the right answer.

The Truth. So hidden within the control phase (going slow allows you to speed up) is power and hidden in the energy phase (releasing can produce spin) is control. A balanced, mature, master stroke, taking in both the need for control and power. The yin and the yang of tennis. The male and the female, the positive pole, and the negative pole in electronics. Nothing good happens without both. The tools of the tennis master. Find that balance.

This balance is a very cool place to live on a tennis court, and any day you can get to there, even for brief moments, is a very good day that will live long in your motivational memory. You can't wait to get back there. "Tennis is an easy game, that hard part is learning how to do it the easy way." And that is so intriguing. Work it!

Men's Tennis

Our Saturday Men's Tennis Drop-in held an End-of-Summer tournament on Saturday 9/30. There were three flights, and the three winners, Dave Howcamp, Rick Davenport, and Dave Elders. are pictured in the middle of all the participants, holding their trophy, a bottle of Barretta Family Vineyards 2021 Estate Bottled Cabernet. That's a nice prize! And a great event!

The men play drop-in tennis on Th. 10:30-12, & Sat. 9-10:30



Orindawoods Tennis Club - Winter 2023/24 Junior Tennis 650 Orindawoods Drive, Orinda, CA 94563

Winter '23/'24 junior tennis at Orindawoods Tennis Club (OTC) will operate from Monday, November 13, 2023, to Monday, February 12, 2024. If you are interested in participating please contact Erik Oehlschlager via email at erik@orindawoodstennis.com. Groups are formed based on player levels and the following grade school designations:

- Transition Kindergarteners and Kindergarteners (TK & K) - 5 years old by 2/12/2024
- First through Third Graders (1st - 3rd)
- Fourth and Fifth Graders (4th & 5th)
- Sixth through Tenth Graders (6th - 10th)

We use two player level categories for groupings: 1) developmental groups - those learning to develop service, groundstroking, and ball tracking skills that are necessary for playing points; and 2) playing groups - those that have demonstrated the ability to play points using service, return-of-service, and groundstroke rallying skills. Participation in the playing groups is by invitation only and limited to 4th through 10th graders.

The Winter '23/'24 costs and schedule of daily times for all groups are summarized below in Table 1.

TABLE 1. WINTER 2023/24 GROUPS AND COSTS SCHEDULE

TIMES	GROUPS, COSTS, AND SESSIONS			
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
3:00 - 4:00 PM			1ST-3RD DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	TK-K DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$185 NON-MEMBERS \$210
3:15 - 4:00 PM	TK-K DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$185 NON-MEMBERS \$210	TK-K DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$185 NON-MEMBERS \$210		
4:00 - 5:00 PM	1ST-3RD DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	1ST-3RD DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	4TH & 5TH DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	4TH & 5TH PLAYERS MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275
5:00 - 6:00 PM	6TH-10TH DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	6TH-10TH PLAYERS MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	6TH-10TH DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275	6TH-10TH PLAYERS MEMBERS \$250 NON-MEMBERS \$275

The Winter '23/'24 schedule of dates and the planned schedule of dates for Spring '24, Summer '24, and Fall '24 are presented below in Table 2.

TABLE 2. 2023/24 DATE SCHEDULE

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