



# Orindawoods Tennis News

November 2018 Vol: 24. Issue 11

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*

## Thanksgiving

*"Days I keep my gratitude higher than my expectations, I have really good days."* Ray Wylie Hubbard.

November is the month of Thanksgiving, and for being thankful for what we have. I'm thankful for Orindawoods, and the people here at the Club. We are so lucky to have such a wonderful place to escape from the world, enjoy great friends, a fine facility, get exercise, and play the game of tennis. Orindawoods is a special place, an amazing community, and a place of great energy and enthusiasm. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving season. – Keith & Patric.

## Holiday Schedule

<b>November 22-23</b>	Thanksgiving Pro Shop <b>Closed</b>
<b>December 24-25</b>	Christmas Pro Shop <b>Closed</b>
<b>Dec 31, Jan 1</b>	New Year's Pro Shop <b>Closed</b>

There may be other days we are closed between Christmas and New Years. TBD.

## Orindawoods Junior Championships

The Orindawoods Junior Championships were played the weekend of October 19-21. Many juniors from all over Contra Costa County participated in this great event. Many of the players from our own junior program took part in the action.

Thank you to all the members for sacrificing one weekend a year to support junior tennis. It is the future of our game, and a joy to see all these young people playing tennis.

## Looking Ahead

### Cash in 2019 at Orindawoods

**For Tennis Lessons:** In 2019, for accounting, timely depositing and security reasons, we are looking to reduce the amount of cash here at Orindawoods. In addition, we would like to make it easier for people to pay for services. We are opening up the option to pay with your credit or debit card courtside, as well as pay with checks.

What!!!! Orindawoods is entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century (hey, we only missed it by 19 years – remember Y2K)??????

We ask those people who now pay for tennis lessons with cash, to transition to one of the other methods: check or card. Thank you!

**Guest fees** will continue to be paid in check or cash, but we will also take credit cards if we are in the office and not out on the court teaching. Please don't interrupt a fellow member's lesson to pay a guest fee.

**Tennis Events** such as the Ladies and Men's clinics, Twilights and other parties will still accept cash payments, but also have a credit/debit option for your convenience.

The credit/debit option will be available starting in December 2018.

## Tennis Tip:

### Whose Your Master?

It has often been said, that "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (money)" Luke 6:24

## Mike McNeill Memorial Service

A service will be held for Mike McNeill on November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11 a.m. at Hull's Mortuary (1139 Saranap Ave) in Walnut Creek. We miss you Mike.

## Monday Night Tennis.

We are hosting our Monday Night Tennis social play for those who register every Monday evening. If you are interested in getting in the rotation, let Keith know. Denis Weil is organizing our off-season tennis social night.

## The Pool Scene

### Pool Closing

The Tennis Club Pool is closing after last weekend in October (Oct 28<sup>th</sup> is the last day). The nighttime temperatures just get too low to heat the pool all winter long. Hopefully you had a great summer at the pool. We look forward to starting up again in early May!

## Mother Nature Takes Over Court Washing

Our twice monthly Friday court washing ends at the end of October. We turn the job over to Mother Nature, who, unfortunately, has a bit of an irregular schedule. We don't know exactly when she is going to wash the courts. I do have a crystal ball in my office. You are welcome to peer into it, as well as a court cam and weather page on the website, which of course, are 100% accurate.

For those of you who love tennis and hate rainy weather, we have an alternative fact for you: it isn't rain, it's merely water falling from the sky that happens to get everything wet. I'm sure that's helpful.

## 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!

## Quote of the Month:

*"Days I keep my gratitude higher than my expectations I have really good days."*  
– Ray Wylie Hubbard

**You can't have two primary objectives.** I was rallying some the other day, and realized that Luke 6:24 was also true in playing tennis. We can't have two masters here either. Our loyalties are going to go to one or the other. One tennis version of the biblical quote that came to my mind was, "you can't serve form and power." You are either stroking the ball properly or be concerned with power. Your mind goes one way, or the other. As soon as we start primarily focusing on propelling the ball, the form, and the resultant control, spin, deception and ironically power (power that is useful), goes out

the window. When we apply too much pressure to the back of the ball, to making it go forward, we lose all sight of aiming, spin, placement. The ball bounces off the racquet, often too far, or straight into the net. We become erratic at best, terrible at worst.

This is not to say, that there isn't a natural power, that comes from good form. Form that doesn't cause us to lose control, and the other important elements of the game.

My coach Doug would often say, that the problem with most players (and most teachers) is that they get too focused on one aspect of the game. Tennis OCD. We obsess on one quality. Hitting the ball hard is a huge attraction, and temptation for most of us. Who doesn't like to see the ball go fast? What we don't realize in our blind ambition and obsession is that what we really desire (isn't it obvious?!?!?!?) is that the ball goes fast, goes in, is a winner, etc... but we dumb it down to just one aspect, speed. Pure speed. "I feel the need, the need for speed." – Top Gun.

**What does focus on one element do for us?** The most common thing to happen after an ace, is a double fault. On the ace, you probably had a natural, fluid motion, and the ace caught everyone by surprise. Including you. But on the next shot, you are trying to recreate the result, and are focused on certain elements, often speed, or placement, and not the whole picture. You miss the first attempt at blasting the ball, and have no rhythm left for the second serve. You either try a hard one again or freeze up and clunk the second one in the net. Either way, you miss. Double fault.

**Touch.** I have had tremendous success recently just focusing on getting a good touch on the ball. Receiving the ball, catching the ball, continuing with my ideal stroke pattern, and leaving the "hitting" or propulsion of the ball to the racquet.

And I mean touching the ball. Soft. Hold the racquet loosely. Letting the incoming ball feel like it is stopping the movement of the racquet. Of course, the body keeps going, and the racquet and the ball are moved forward, the ball cushioning into the string bed, and then releasing. It should almost feel like the racquet is releasing too (but don't let go!). "Hold on loosely, but don't let go." – Thirty-eight Special.

**Trust.** There is a great deal of trust involved in letting go, or letting the game flow, but since it is much more connected with reality, than trying to force your will upon a situation, the results are much better. Way, way better. Night and day better.

---

### **Tennis Tip:**

### **Returns, Two Big Lies**

There are two ideas that we have when it comes to returning serve that really don't do us any favors. In fact, these two lies make it almost impossible to return effectively.

**The first idea** that we hold dear (or cling to tightly) is that because the ball has to land in the box to be in play, the ball is coming right to us (and therefore we don't have to move). Like any good lie or con, there is an element of truth to it. The serve basically does have to come to us. They can't serve the ball to the other side of the court, or even very deep on our side. The ball has to land short and it has to be coming in our direction.

Knowing this is helpful in toning down our fear of being overpowered, or the ball being out of our reach. Aces are relatively rare, even at the highest levels of the game.

But, just because the ball is coming in our direction, certainly doesn't mean we don't have to move. You may only be able to make a step or two, often at the last second, but it is crucial in not reaching for the ball, the main cause of return errors.

**The Contact Myth.** When we reach for the ball, we prioritize contact and coordination over everything else, to our detriment. Contact is pointless if you are not aiming. Reaching changes where our racquet is pointing. Baaaaaad news!

So, it is essential that we move our feet to adjust to the ball, so that our hands can continue to aim over the net, towards the court, as well as contact the ball. This whole problem of movement on the return is exacerbated by the second lie.



## **Orindawoods Tennis Club**

650 Orindawoods Dr.  
Orinda, CA 94563

Phone:  
925-254-1065

Fax:  
925-254-1380

Website:  
orindawoodstennis.com

Smart Phone Reservation App:  
PlayTennisConnect

Twitter:  
@orindawoodstc

Facebook:  
Orindawoods Tennis Club

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

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

**Tennis Staff:**  
Ethan Arroyo  
Ryan Banisadr  
Peter Reaves  
Alan Zhou

**Weekend Staff:**  
Peter Reaves

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Keith Wheeler

**The second lie** is that the ball is coming so fast, that we don't have time to move. Again, partly true, and completely wrong. It is true that there is not a lot of time, which means that we don't want to waste time, and want to move efficiently, but we want to move. It's crucial.

I like to think of returning much like the duel in baseball between the pitcher and the batter. The pitcher is trying to break the batter's swing down, and swing at "bad" pitches, with half swings (no legs or core in the stroke). In tennis, the server is trying to break down the returner's stroke, so that they either lose power, or accuracy. Or both. We want to keep our feet moving, so that we can maintain our stroke.

**Three Elements.** There are three elements to playing a shot: form, footwork and timing. The form needs to remain relatively constant. That's how your aim and maximize contact. Form informs the footwork, and when to start (timing).

We may only have time for a step, or two, but it is crucial that we are moving. Often, we are still moving as we make contact, just finishing the move. There is a mistaken idea that we should be standing still when we hit. Another lie. What you want is balance, not being stationary. You can be in balance while moving, after all. Standing still may not be possible on the return (or a lot of other shots, actually). How often are the pros standing still to hit? Not often.

On the return in particular, we often start the stroke while we are still shifting into position, only arriving at the proper spot at the very last instant. And only after contact, do we finish moving with a recovery step while following through.

**Possible?** All this is possible, but you need to practice. How often do you practice your return? Certainly, practicing groundstrokes is a good start, but the ball tends to bounce a bit higher from a serve, and the timing and movement is slightly different. If you can get your partner, or practice buddy to hit you some serves, and return the favor, you will be well on the way to improving your game. Obviously, playing matches is practice, but play practice matches, were you are not afraid to try out some of these moves, and don't care if you miss while you develop your return game.

**Number Two.** The return of serve, after all, is the second most important shot in tennis (after the serve). You don't want a "number two" return of serve. And we practice the serve (probably not enough), but we never practice the return, and we certainly don't warm it up. It's even considered bad etiquette (Code of Tennis) to return practice serves. Really????? There are some dumb rules, but...

**Warm up!** Look at the pros, out on the practice courts, warming up before their match on the stadium court. They are hitting all the shots, and especially some serves and returns. As part of your pre-match warm up, play a few points as well. The five-minute warm up with your opponent is a joke, get out there pre-match and do a proper warm up!

And stop believing those two lies about the return, no matter how true they initially sound or appear to be. Move!

### Strategy Tip:

## The Truth About Tie Breakers

Tie-breakers have become a huge part of tennis, and especially local, league and tournament tennis. They have transformed the game, and we would be foolish not to take a look at the tie-breaker, and notice what is fundamentally different about them, and what to do about it.

1. **Cumulative scoring.** That is every point counts towards the final total. You don't start over again after every game, or set, as in regular tennis scoring. That means:
2. **Errors don't go away.** Once you have lost a point, especially from an error, it can't be erased by "getting to deuce" or the game ending and you start over, luv / luv. That means:
3. **No throw away points.** All the points count the same. Losing a point when you are down 40-0 in a game your opponent is serving is really different than losing a point 30-40. In the first case, you have almost no chance of breaking serve, in the second, a very good chance. So, don't think that because you are up 3-1, you can lose a couple points (or take risks), because now it is 3-3, and a whole new ball game. Therefore:
4. **Consistency is rewarded.** So, you don't want to make a lot of errors, especially when you are serving. This doesn't mean you don't "go for your shots" you just want to make them. Playing "too safe" against someone who isn't afraid to go for their shots isn't going to work either. But you do need to make your shots. Play high-percentage tennis.

**The good news.** You still have to win the last point to win, and you still have to win by two points. These are fundamental tennis qualities that help make tennis such a great game.

**Nightmare.** One of our members was playing a playoff match a couple weeks ago, and they were in the third set, on serve at 3-4, and the captain of the home team walked on the court and said, "the allotted time is up, the match is over". Our player, after overcoming the shock, asked if it was a tie, since they were on serve and the match was basically tied. "No, you lose. Another match is scheduled to begin now, you're behind 3-4, and we have to leave the court".

**Run It Up, Run It Down.** Hopefully this is an anomaly, and not the way of the future. A time limit, like in inferior games like football, basketball and soccer, would really change the nature of tennis. In tennis, you have to be playing better than your opponent at the end. You can't just run up the score and then run down the clock. True, you may be choking your brains out at the end, and totally suck (by your standards), but they have to be worse. You win the last point, you win.

**And you still have to have a clear advantage.** Win by two points (though no-add clearly attacks that principle – again for the sake of time – argh!!!!). At least in tie-breakers, we have retained the win-by-two idea, which is fundamental to play. No one shot, or bad call, or lucky winner, can do you in. Even a bad call or lucky shot on match point, while unfortunate, still wasn't the reason you lost. You had to do what proceeded that event, to be in that precarious position.

**Momentum can be huge.** Play steady and try to get on a roll. It's OK to lose points, but don't make silly errors and end up losing several points in a row. They hit a good shot, fine. You make a mistake, fine. Just tighten up strategically on the next one. Play high-percentage tennis (play the middle in doubles, cross-court in singles).

**The Big-Picture Plus Side to Tie-breakers.** I realize that it is difficult for normal people like us, with lives outside tennis, to play a match that has no set time or ending point. Playing a three-and-a-half-hour league match on a normal day is a challenge for most people. Most of us usually play 1.5 hours, or maybe 2 hours, and that is enough. Tie-breakers, and no add scoring, goes some ways towards making tennis and the length of time playing tennis more manageable for the average person. Makes a lot of sense. We use it in Club events, after all, when people need to finish at about the same time.

I meant golf, 18 holes, five hours, 105 strokes, no wonder you need a drink after that... (just kidding, I know you shoot a 72, ... on the back nine).

**These changes are here to stay,** and it is up to us, as players, to learn to adjust our strategy, conditioning, and game-plans to do the best we can in a new tennis environment. It's a bit sad that the decisive "third set" is the set that is the least like traditional tennis, and thus puts a huge emphasis on our ability to manage tie-breakers, but since that is the case, it would be foolish not to prepare for such events.

**Practice.** Make tie-breakers part of your weekly practice matches. Play a set or two, then play a tie-breaker. They are fun, once you get the hang of them, and they encourage focus and smart play. Nothing wrong with that! Good luck out there!

## **Winter Junior Program 2019**

The 2019 Winter Junior Clinics begins the week of **January 7<sup>th</sup>**, and will continue thru the week of **March 4<sup>th</sup>**. The 9-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>\$125*</b>	<b>\$200*</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>\$235*</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>\$235*</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>\$300*</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>			

**\*Non-members should add \$25 (Lil' Ones, only \$15).**

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

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

**Inclement Weather:** in case of questionable weather (rain), please check out the Club website for a court condition update.

**Tennis shoes required** (no shoes that mark).

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