



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

Sunday Social Tennis

July Twilight Tennis BBQ

The next Twilight Tennis BBQ is Sunday, July 23rd. We will play "mix and match" tennis from 5-7 p.m., to be followed by our classic BBQ on the deck. As always, we will feature Kinder's steak and chicken.

To register, contact Keith (kieth@orindawoodstennis.com). The cost is \$25 / person, and let Keith know if you want **Steak or Chicken. Bring Your Own Beverages (BYOB)**. All other foods are provided. We usually have complimentary chair massage, TBD.

We had about 40 people for our June event, the Just Because Tournament. Twilights are a lot of fun, and I hope you can join us. It is a great way to play with friends, meet new tennis partners, enjoy some great food, and live the dream that is Orindawoods.

Court Resurfacing

The repair and resurfacing of Courts 2&3 will take place starting Monday, July 31 and probably last a couple of weeks, at least. The timing of the work coincides with the end of the Summer Junior Program, August vacations and is prior to the Fall tennis season (Fall starts on about August 15th, these days, with the return of school – sure seems like summer). During the construction, the Club will only have 5 courts. Teaching will be done on Court 5. There may be some limited ball machine use on court 4, though we have no place to store the machine, with 2&3 not accessible. TBD.

Fortunately, this is a time of year when a lot of members go on vacations and was selected for this reason (court work must be done in the warmer, drier summer months, and the two "dead" periods are end of May, early June, and early August).

Rather than the basic patch and color, we are rebuilding Courts 2&3 by placing a rubber mat on top of the old courts, and the painting the surface on top of that. The mat stops the cracks and dead spots, and plays very similar to our current hard courts, with just a bit more cushioning on the feet. I have played a bit on this surface. It is very forgiving and has a nice bounce.

Pool Is Lovely

We are getting fabulous reports from the pool, how wonderful the water is (warm, but not too warm) and how much more consistent the temperature of the spa and pool water are day after day, hour after hour. The new pool and spa heaters are a complete success, and we are thrilled with the results. Picture Perfect Pools does a nice job of keeping the pool running well, and Pacific Maintenance Solutions cleans the pool area.

Please remember, you are responsible for cleaning up your own mess. We don't have "table service", so please leave the pool in the same condition you found it. Personally, I like to return the chairs to where I found them, but not everyone does. Now that we have had a bit of warm weather (finally), come on down and enjoy a splash!

The pool opens at dawn and closes at 10pm.

2023 Club Rates

Tennis Lessons with Keith & Erik:

½ 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 Payday

Tuesday 10:30-12	no cost
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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 is continuing in his fine tradition of being our expert racquet stringer. 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:

"Worrying is like paying a debt you don't owe."

■ Mark Twain

Orindawoods Tennis Club

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Staff Summer Breaks

There will be a couple of mini summer breaks for our staff this summer. Please keep these in mind if you are trying to contact staff or arrange a lesson:

- Erik's vacation 7/1-7/7; 7/31-8/15 (end of Summer Program to first school day)
- Keith's vacation 7/9-7/13: 8/30- 9/5 at US Open.
- There will be **no Ladies Clinic on 7/11 or Men's Clinic on 7/13**. Sorry for the inconvenience. Keith will be back the next week (7/18 and 7/20 respectfully).

Pickleball Playdays

- Tuesdays 6-7:30 p.m. (hosted by Keith and John Bockman, though both are away 7/11, but still come and play)
- Wednesdays 10:30-12 noon (hosted by Linda Winter).
- Pickleball Lessons: Keith does teach pickleball lessons, if you are interested. Same set up, fees, as the private tennis lessons. Contact Keith to schedule (keith@orindawoodstennis.com).

Fall Junior Program

Erik's Orindawoods Fall Junior Program will start shortly after school starts, around August 21st. The details of the program will be coming out in the next few weeks. There are still three more weeks of our great summer program. Some spots are still available. Contact Erik (erik@orindawoodstennis.com) if you have questions or would like to sign up. See pages 5-6 for the Summer details.

Monday Team Tennis

Each Monday this summer we are enjoying the fun of Monday Team Tennis. Four teams are competing this year for the MTT title (as usual). Each team plays a match featuring nine lines, a combination of Mens (2), Womens (2) and Mixed Doubles (5). The dinners afterwards on the Club deck are creative and tasty! Here are the standings after 4 weeks (we play 12 weeks);

Team	Captain	Win	Loss	PCT	GB
Team Two	John	168	120	.583	---
Team Four	Keith	142	146	.493	26
Team One	Cindy	138	150	.479	30
Team Three	Rich / Chris	128	160	.444	40

The weather has been mostly cool but nice, with one arctic evening to date. It's a mild summer in Orinda, as you know.

Tennis Tip:

The Vortex

Over the years, we have talked a lot about tennis technique. Lots of different methods for creating the ideal tennis stroke. Summarizing the latest developments in tennis: We don't want to hit the ball, or use the hitting model as our guide, or paradigm. Instead, it is best if we think of receiving the ball (catching), driving the ball (leverage) and releasing the ball (throwing).

The big change in tennis in my lifetime is this change from a swing-based stroke, pulling or pushing the racquet forward, creating a momentum and striking the ball (FYI: muscles pull, not push, but it feels like pushing).

Now there is a "throwing-based" paradigm, where the ball is caught and then thrown over the net. To the untrained eye of the average fan, these can look similar. They are worlds apart in how force is created, transferred, and applied to the ball and in the game. Throwing is the explanation for both the increase in power and spin in tennis, and much greater control (at higher speeds). The modern racquets often get the credit here, advertised as "more powerful", but it is modern technique that drives the new power game. This isn't your grandma's tennis, not just her tennis racquet.

Seeing. The easiest way to detect the difference is to watch the racquet's approach to the ball. In a swing, there is a lot of speed before contact, and often a slowing down to find the ball (resulting in a loss of power and control). Whereas in a catch and throw method, the receiving (before the ball arrives) is slow, and then there is an acceleration (usually from torque / turning) that slings the ball out of the catch and throws it forward. The increased quality and accuracy of the receiving skills allows for a rapid acceleration. It may seem risky, but is quite safe, as the ball is inches,

not feet away, plus the ball is turned for spin. This is not 80s, Borg-type spin of brushing the ball up, low to high, lifting the arm ("windshield wiper). That was a transition paradigm, leaving us with little power (though lots of spin).

On to today: When we throw a ball, we hold it softly, our wrist flops back and then forward, as a reaction to the movement of our arm, our shoulders. The muscles are loose, and lengthening. There are no contractions (tightening), our arm is a whip, the ball is flung forward, not muscled. The feeling is light, one of releasing, of letting go.

Same with throwing or releasing a tennis ball. Move the racquet forward like you were going to toss the racquet itself, or throw it, but simply hold on lightly at the last moment, with a bit of pressure in your fingers (well after contact). Even feel like the racquet would come out of your hand, if you didn't make contact with the ball. That contact, pushes the racquet handle back into your hand, preventing its escape. Again, stay muscle free.

As a kid I remember being taught to keep my wrist firm at contact, that you didn't want "wrist" in the shot. And in some sense, this is still true, I don't want to contract the muscle in the hand and arm to move the wrist, but I also want to keep those muscles loose so that the wrist releases. I don't move the wrist (consciously), but I let it move. This can be a subtle difference, until it is mastered, then you will feel it. Mastery can be as close and simple as "don't try."

The speed of throwing comes from rotating the shoulder (70%) and releasing the wrist (20%). Of course, releasing is a non-action, while rotating the shoulder involves some stretch and shorting of the muscles well before contact. The remaining 10% is from a variety of sources but is summarized in a small amount of momentum going forward, which the main purpose is to facilitate rhythm and NOT power. We move towards the ball at the speed of reaching (as if to catch) and not at the speed of hitting or striking. If I try to make this 10% larger, the whole thing breaks down very rapidly, and is one of the most common errors (a misunderstanding of force - June 23 Newsletter - reasons why we miss). This doesn't change much from throwing overhand (a serve - elite serves have been like this for over 100 years, since Bill Tilden), or throwing underhand or side arm (a forehand and backhand - a more recent development over the past 30 years - Andre and Graf being the first).

When I reach out to catch the ball in front of me (speed of reaching) and I rotate the arm and therefore release the wrist in the ensuing force, the racquet head is thrown forward in a spiral motion, resembling - for a crucial moment - a vortex (cyclone, tornado, whirlpool, etc.). The ball is "pulled" into this vortex, and then shot back out, it is caught up in the tremendous force (energy) of the rotation. A small movement of the arm (thus hand and handle of the racquet) rotating causes great force out in the racquet head (racquet head speed). This is physics. Gears and levers.

The primary job of the player is to create this vortex and position it so that the incoming ball is coming right towards it. Then to maintain that vortex and release the ball. The path of the ball should hit the stroke, not the stroke hit the ball (i.e. do the stroke and put the ball in the way of it).

Energy is the most important thing in performance (and playing a tennis ball). You can have perfect contact, aim precisely, good form, but if there is no energy, the ball doesn't go anywhere, or at least very far towards your target.

If you alter the vortex, to "chase" the ball, the energy is dissipated and largely lost, and so even if you "find" the ball, you don't get the desired result. Think of cleaning a toilet bowl ("Toilet Bowl Physics"). You flush, and the resulting whirlpool pulls everything down. If you put the brush in the toilet to scrub a spot you missed, it disturbs the whirlpool, and largely dissipates the energy, and the water becomes disorganized and drains much more slowly.

Footwork and positioning, how you line the vortex up to receive and send the ball, and the timing of the turn or release, is how we control the shot. Not through altering the shape of our motion, and losing the magic effects (physics, created by physiology) of the vortex.

To summarize, with a loose wrist, when we reach forward to "catch" the ball, the handle (butt) of the racquet reaches, and the head drops down and behind (lags behind the hand / handle). WE don't move it back; it falls back into place. This is crucial because the **power comes from the weakness**, the loose nature of the grip. You can't replicate this force with muscles. Tension slows the racquet head down (A major misunderstanding, but strength slows you down, makes you "weaker" i.e. less acceleration, thus less force). When the hand reaches as far forward towards the ball as we can reach, as the arm starts to rotate in the process, the head of the racquet is thrown forward. Again, no muscles, let it flop forward. This can feel terribly out of control, but don't worry, when you start playing the ball unbelievably well - like you've never dreamed - you'll get over it. The ball is caught, contacted in the middle of the racquet head's transformation from trailing (lagging) to leading (releasing, tossing, following through), and the ball is both driven (leverage) and then slung forward in a spiraling motion that envelops it as it releases forward. The hand / handle of the racquet doesn't have momentum, but the racquet head, thrown forward, does. Think of the path of the head of your racquet creating a cone, a vortex, extending out beyond heel of your hand, beyond the contact point, out in front of you, at full extension, like the barrel of a gun, or cannon. The ball is literally shot forward. Not hit.

The hand and arm reach in a largely linear path towards the ball, but again, this is loose and will naturally move (DO NOT PULL IT) to the left (right-handed forehand) when you reach full extension because it is attached to your shoulder. The follow through is something that happens, you let happen, and is not created by a muscle pull. Many of the best players have a great variety of follow-throughs, depending on where they are tossing the ball / racquet. In some sense, you must forget the ball in this movement, forget its weight and impact, and just move the arm / hand (thus racquet) the way you want, putting the ball in the way, to be caught in the physics of the motion / vortex. Tightening, griping, applying strength at impact slows the racquet head (even if the attempt is to speed it up), force is diminished.

I know this can be a bit hard to visualize, let alone do, but if you rotate your arm, and rather than control the racquet path, just let it go out in a spiraling motion, like you were going to toss it, you will start to feel the release. If the physical work you are doing doesn't seem light, and easy, and almost effortless, you don't quite have it yet. This is why good players make tennis look easy (hint: it is easy), almost effortless. Much of the "hard work" is psychological, in learning to surrender to the laws of physics, and just let go (get out of the way / stop being controlling).

One final warning from a fellow traveler on this path. When you start to get it, you may play several in a row, it's scary, but it is working. Say you make 9 shots in a row, and the on the tenth one, you don't quite get the vortex lined up right, or the timing of the release is a bit off, and you miss the shot (often it is played very well but because you are early, it goes into the net). Immediately the thought will surface, "this doesn't work", or "I can't do this" or "I'm not good enough" or "I haven't practiced this enough for a match," and this is some of the wonkiest thinking a very wonky-thinking world that there is out there. You just made 9 out of 10! And those 9 were probably better (or have the potential to be better) than your old way, which "worked so well", but never got 9 out of 10. It's bad math.

The truth is, the issue is, we don't like being out of control (even if it is to gain even more control). And we don't like getting "worse", to get "better." "The biggest enemy of great, is good." Be kind to yourself, and just keep going for it! You're on the path! Yeah, you'll miss a few. Tennis is a game of errors. Make fewer, play the shots you make better. Good luck out there!

Tennis Tip:

Dealing with Lobs.

First, learn how to lob. Please! It is the most effective shot in club tennis when you are put in certain situations. Specifically, deep, in the middle of the court, especially if you are playing a backhand, especially if that backhand is high.

Technique: The best way to play a lob, is to stroke it, or feel like you are lifting the ball up into the air, carrying it on the strings. Hitting it, or poking it, with a short, jab motion leads to a lot of inconsistency. Short, too deep, short, too deep, you want to lift the ball to the back of the court.

Two Step Process: Once you can return a lob with a lob (remember, the easiest shot, almost all the time, is to play the ball back the way it came: i.e., high and deep, return it high and deep), you have the first step in defending the lob. The second step is to wait for the lob where it is generally going, and where you will have to play it. Most lobs go to a specific area of the court. Seriously, they do.

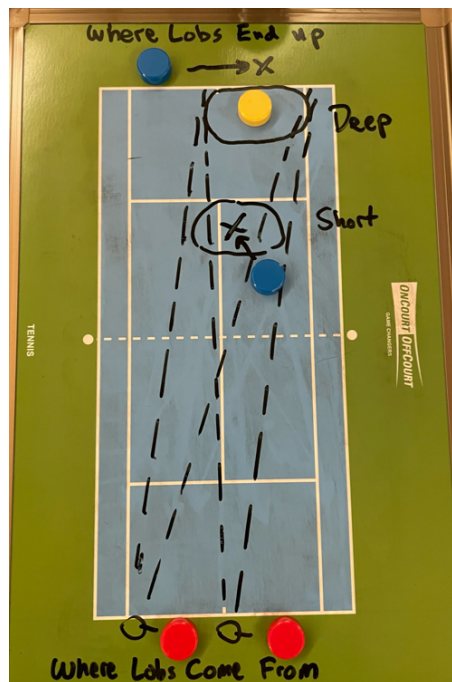
One of my favorites and often told sports stories is of **Wayne Gretzky**, The Great One, who while all the other players in hockey chased the puck around the ice like mad men, Wayne simply waited where the puck would show up. This is the same for elite strikers in front of the goal in soccer, or good fielders in baseball, to mention a couple of other sports. Figure out where the ball is going and go there and wait for it. Here is the tricky part: you don't have to be right all the time, just often enough to be successful (which is far below 100% of the time).

So where do you stand to receive lobs? In the middle of the court, a few feet behind the baseline. That is the median spot on the court where you will have to return the deep lob from. (For the net person, the "short lob", it is more in the middle of the court, slightly on the ad side, about 3-5 feet inside of the service line - if they are deeper than what you can reach from there, they are your partner's — but your partner has to understand where lobs go, this is their responsibility, not yours — stop covering their job, and not doing yours. Don't take the bullet for their failure).

When do you move there? As soon as you are reasonably sure they are going to lob (or play a shot to the middle).

When is that? 1) When you hit a deep ball, especially high, down the middle (especially to the backhand). Don't wait for them to hit to move to position. So, a deep serve, down the middle, on the deuce court, you should move to the middle of the court before they even return it. 2) If a player is at the baseline and moving back for the ball, they are usually lobbing. 3) Most players don't disguise the lob either, so if the racquet starts to drop down below the ball, move into position.

Let Go of Defending Everything. Remember, if they hit a groundstroke from the middle, that shot will be mostly up the middle as well. So even if they don't lob, you're in the right place. It's very hard to play an angle consistently from a high middle shot, so stop covering the angle. (When you play your shot to the middle, remember, you don't have to be right all the time! And FYI: you want them to try an angle on a high middle shot, for they will miss a lot, and their shots will be weak - every time they hit a winner off of this, is good news for you, because they will foolishly think they can make this shot and try again. Remember, a player that hits a winner on every third shot, and misses the other two is a loser, no matter how impressive the "winners" are). Some people even



say, “winners are for losers.” I think that is a bit extreme, but you need to work the point to set up an easy winner, and not try a shot you can’t make very often, or only on a “good” day, with a tail wind, and the sun in their eyes.

With all the whining I hear about lobs and how “I can’t “cover my partner’s side too”, you’d think people would start moving to cover the lob landing area (because it isn’t your partner’s side, it’s your “back half” and they have the “front half”. (Diagram).

Double Coverage: Balls from the middle of the court, almost always land in the middle 50% of the opponent’s side. Both the net player and the backcourt player should be covering the middle. One short, one deep. And if you are coming in on your serve, come in up the middle, as you still have responsibility for the deep ball, the lob.

Stop whining, start winning, by dealing with the lob. That doesn’t mean you stop every lob, it means you stop lobbing as a successful strategy to win enough points to beat you. Say “nice shot” when they make a good one, and keep defending the lob by playing the percentages. “Just deal with it.”

Orindawoods Tennis Club Summer 2023 Junior Tennis Program

Afternoon Sessions Monday through Thursday, June 5th through July 27th

The Orindawoods Tennis Club’s Summer 2023 Junior Tennis Program will run from Monday, June 5th through Thursday, July 27th and offers a variety of afternoon junior tennis clinics during weekly Monday through Thursday sessions. The program does not operate the week Independence Day is observed. Clinics are grouped by the following 2022/2023 grade school designations:

- Transitional Kindergarteners and Kindergarteners (TK & K);
- First and Second Graders (1st & 2nd);
- Third through Fifth Graders (3rd - 5th);
- Sixth through Eighth Graders (6th - 8th); and
- High School Tennis Team players.

Our program utilizes aspects of the USTA’s Junior Development Program, which features Red, Orange, and Green tennis balls to promote stroke development and ball tracking skills. These tennis ball gradations allow players to more quickly ascend from learning basic strokes to rallying to point-play.

Our Summer 2023 program will also incorporate pickle-ball and table tennis (ping-pong) play Monday through Thursday for our 3rd through 5th graders and on select days for our 6th through 8th graders.

Summer 2023 weekly session clinic costs and times for all groups are summarized below in Table 1. Level descriptions of the clinics follows Table 2, which shows the daily operating schedule for the Summer 2023 program.

TABLE 1. SUMMER 2023 JR. TENNIS PROGRAM SESSIONS AND COSTS

CLINIC GROUPS AND TIMES	WEEKLY SESSIONS AND DATES						
	WEEK 1 6/5 - 6/8	WEEK 2 6/12 - 6/15	WEEK 3 6/19 - 6/22	WEEK 4 6/26 - 6/29	WEEK 5 7/10 - 7/13	WEEK 6 7/17 - 7/20	WEEK 7 7/24 - 7/27
TK & K 1:00 - 1:45 PM RED	M - TH \$60 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$60 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$60 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$60 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$60 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$60 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$60 (\$15 NMF)
1ST & 2ND 1:45 - 3:00 PM ORANGE	M - TH \$100 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$100 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$100 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$100 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$100 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$100 (\$15 NMF)	M - TH \$100 (\$15 NMF)
3RD - 5TH 1:00 - 4:00 PM ORANGE & GREEN	M - TH \$180 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$180 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$180 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$180 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$180 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$180 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$180 (\$30 NMF)
6TH - 8TH 1:00 - 4:00 PM GREEN & YELLOW	M - TH \$240 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$240 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$240 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$240 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$240 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$240 (\$30 NMF)	M - TH \$240 (\$30 NMF)
HIGH SCHOOL TEAM 4:00 - 5:30 PM YELLOW	T & Th \$60 (\$15 NMF)	T & Th \$60 (\$15 NMF)	T & Th \$60 (\$15 NMF)	T & Th \$60 (\$15 NMF)	T & Th \$60 (\$15 NMF)	T & Th \$60 (\$15 NMF)	T & Th \$60 (\$15 NMF)

NMF = NON-MEMBER FEE

TABLE 2. ORINDAWOODS TENNIS CLUB JR. TENNIS PROGRAM SCHEDULE

JUNE							JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3							1
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30	31					

CLINIC DESCRIPTIONS

TK & K Red Lil' Ones clinics develop hand-eye coordination and racquet control so that students can start contacting the ball using basic service and groundstroke mechanics.

1st & 2nd and 3rd - 5th Orange Future Stars clinics develop hand-eye coordination, racquet control, and basic service and groundstroke mechanics so that students can start trying to rally with other players.

3rd - 5th and 6th – 8th Green Tennis Development clinics teach and develop basic service and groundstroke mechanics while emphasizing tracking down balls with various trajectories and learning to keep the ball in play using full groundstrokes. 3rd through 5th grade Green players will have to demonstrate the ability to start points with serves and return-of-serves. Green Tennis Development clinics are the starting point for 6th through 8th grade players until they demonstrate the ability to play points at our 6th through 8th grade Yellow ball clinic level.

6th – 8th Yellow Match Play Training clinics are for players who have demonstrated the ability to start points with serves and return-of-serves, track down balls with various trajectories, and keep the ball in play. The goal of these clinics is to further develop stroke mechanics, rallying, and point-play skills in order to play tennis matches. These clinics will also introduce and develop net play (volleys and overheads) skills.

High School Team Yellow Match-Play Training ball clinic is for High School team players. The goal of this clinic is to provide off-season all-court training to players looking to move up the ladder on their high school tennis teams.

CLINIC REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

E-mail erik@orindawoodstennis.com to inquire about appropriate clinic levels for your child(ren) and to register for clinics. The following information is required for registration:

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) - First and Last Name(s), E-mail(s), and Mobile Phone Number(s)
- Child(ren) - First and Last Name(s), 2022/2023 Grade Level(s), and Age(s)
- Clinic(s) - Week(s) and Name(s) of Clinics you wish to register for (i.e. Week 1, 6th – 8th Yellow).
- Are you a member of Orindawoods Tennis Club?

Payment is due before the first clinic date to reserve your space in the clinic(s). Payment can be taken over the phone prior to the start of the program by e-mailing erik@orindawoodstennis.com to arrange a convenient time.