



# 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*

## ***Happy New Year!***

***From all of us, to all of you, happy new year!***

**-- Keith, Patric and the junior staff**

### **2020 Club Dues**

The Club dues for 2020 will be \$140 per month. **If you use autopay, be sure to adjust your payment.** (Obviously, we can't control your bank account—there is a sigh of relief – so please adjust the withdrawal).

Orindawoods is a non-profit organization, so this price simply represents what it costs to run the Club and break even. A privately owned, for-profit club, would have much higher dues. Our focus is on value: the best club for the best price.

Major increases in costs this year were in water, insurance and energy. Sadly, PG&E's problems, and the resulting fires are expensive. Drought and water conservation take their toll as well. There were cost of living raises for our various contractors and employees.

The budget and dues all part of our effort to make Orindawoods the best club we can for you and your fellow members. Thank you for your support.

### **Looking Forward, Looking Back.**

2019 has been a fun year here at Orindawoods. With Monday Team Tennis, Monday Night Tennis and all our Twilights and Tennis socials, plus a few interclub matches, there was a great deal of tennis and social activity here at the Club. Our ladies participated in many various leagues throughout the year, and our men's days, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday continue to be very popular. The Women's Clinic continues to draw large crowds on Tuesday, and the Men's Clinic is growing on Thursdays. The Ball Machine Club was a booming success this year, with more people working on their games and exercising than ever before. Our Hit and Fit workout class continued to be popular with those that want a bit more from tennis.

For 2020 we have approved three landscape projects to improving the look of the Club. In addition, we are working on solutions for our beloved, but somewhat troublesome, cracked court one playing surface.

Social tennis looks strong for 2020. We have a very similar plan for MTT, MNT and all our Twilights and parties for 2020. There were well over 20 socials in 2019, and along with the weekly MNT in the off season, there are weekly social events at the Club. 2020 builds on that schedule.

I want to thank all the members that make Orindawoods such a special club. And especially thank the captains of our teams, the captains of Monday Night Tennis, the others that go above and beyond to organize and arrange social tennis events, whether it is a weekly ladies practice, or men's day, or a social evening. A big thank you goes out to all the parents of our junior players, for getting them to and fro from clinics, tournaments and matches. And finally, to John Bockman, who has helped me with our social calendar, and Denis Weil, for Monday Night Tennis. Bravo!

Orindawoods is a great club, with great members and a staff that loves to bring you the best in tennis and social events. Your Club is fun, educational, social, competitive, healthy and a great place to hang out.

*"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it." – The Bard.*

### **Holiday Pro Shop Hours**

Hard to believe it is the holidays already. As is our custom, we will be closed a couple days to be with our families. The following days the shop will be closed, but as always, you can come enjoy the courts and even play "family doubles."

**December 24-25**

**December 31, Jan 1**

Have a great holiday!

### **Weekly Lessons**

#### **Hit and Fit:**

*TRX workout (strength and stretching) & tennis drills using the Playmate ball machine.*

Friday 10:30-12 noon \$20

Saturday 7:30-9 a.m. \$20

**Register** for Hit and Fit by e-mailing Keith you are attending.

#### **Tuesday Ladies' Clinic:**

Tuesdays at 9:30 \$5

#### **Thursday Men's Clinic:**

Thursdays at 9:30 \$5

The men's and women's clinics are drop-in.

### **Water Only on The Courts**

Hydration is great, so is staying warm, or cool. But we need to remind you that water is the only beverage allowed on the courts (especially if you are spilling it).

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

*"If our basic sense of what we, others and the world are isn't clear and accurate, if our fundamental assumptions are false, we won't be able to proceed successfully to change our deeply ingrained habits. ... Because if you change the leaves and branches but leave the roots intact, you run the risk of reverting to type." - Norman Fischer*



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## Keith on the USTA Board

Executive Tennis Director Keith Wheeler was elected to the USTA NorCal board in November. It's a two-year term. After working with the USTA at the club level for over thirty years, Keith was asked to join in an effort to change some of the ways things are done. It should be a challenging two years. As always, he will do his best to do what is in the long-term best interests of tennis, and Orindawoods. Grow the game, respect the organizations and all participants.

### Tennis Tip

## The Thinking Conundrum

As a teacher, coach and player, I often hear students say that they play better when they don't think. And this is true.

Players do play better when they are trusting their habits, their skills, letting go, and just performing. They are in the unconscious competence state. They know what to do, and they don't think about it. It's automatic.

There is no paralysis by analysis, no over-thinking, no choking, no frustration of telling yourself what to do, and then watching yourself do the opposite.

The problem is, what if what they know, what they do, the habits that they have, aren't very good? Or can be improved upon?

*"You're all perfect. And each of you could use some improvement."* – Suzuki

Of course, to learn anything requires thinking. Learning what you don't know, what's hurting you, what can make you better, and then, step by step, thought by thought, changing those habits to ones that are more helpful. Of course there are visual, and kinesthetic ways of learning too, but all require some conscious breaking down of the old, and replacing with the new.

**There are four stages of learning.** Unconscious incompetence (can't do it, don't know there is anything wrong), conscious incompetence (aware of what you're not able to do, but still can't), conscious competence (know what to do, but have to think real hard to do it), and unconscious competence (it's automatic, you're in the zone, playing feels like instinct).

The irony is that they two "happy" states are the first and the last: You can't do anything and don't know any better, and you can do something, and don't even think about it. In a sense, don't really care how it's done. You just play.

It's in the middle, with thinking, where suffering exists. And where learning happens. Knowing what you want to do, but not being able to do it. And then, knowing what to do, and with focus, mindful accomplishment.

*"When I first studied the art, a punch was just a punch, and a kick was just a kick. As I learned the art, a punch was much more than a punch, a kick much more than a kick. When I mastered the art, a punch was just a punch, and a kick was just a kick."* – Bruce Lee

A lot of people don't like suffering. Seems logical. So they don't think, they don't take chances, and they don't get any better. The problem is, they are avoiding short-term pain that is part of the learning process. And they suffer later, because they don't get any better, they continue to make the same mistakes, lose the same matches, struggle with the same problems, lose to the

same bums they lost to last year. Or they stay the same, and their "thinking / learning" friends pass them by. If they are honest, I don't think anyone really enjoys that. It just takes longer to suffer, so we hope it won't happen.

This is how someone can be a 3.5 for 15 years. You would think if they played that long, they would be getting better. But only if they were trying to change. Many are in denial, afraid to look past today, this shot, right now.

Growing up, we had a guy in our local club that won all the tournaments. Bob the Lob. He was unbeatable, with a very simple formula for playing (the nickname is a huge clue there). He stuck with it, won match after match. But slowly his friends, worked on their game, and one by one, they passed him by. After a while, he wasn't winning any more. Competition, besting his opponents, having a one-up on his friends, is what he loved, so eventually he stopped playing. A sad story. This often happens in junior tennis as well. The kids winning in the 12s, are not the kids winning six years later in the 18s. Admittedly, is quite hard to change a style that is successful now. "Hey, I'm winning..."

With just practice our existing skills improve, but only slightly. If what you are doing is fundamentally not great, it's only going to get marginally better. You'll be a little bit better at not being great. You are hitting a glass ceiling, of what is possible with your current skill set. Pushing only takes you so far. Same with whacking. Or lobbing.

**Short-term pain.** A little short term pain can lead to long-term gain. If I think and make changes, I won't play as well for a short time, which can be painful, but I'm on the way to playing a lot better in the long run.

However, it is not a question of not thinking is bad, or thinking is good, or vice versa. Both have their places, and their pitfalls. For most, it is easier for the player who is not winning now to change, than the player that is on top.

**The Learner's Trap:** If you are one of those courageous souls who is not afraid of the pain of learning, there is still a trap, a pain, a point of suffering reserved just for you. And it doesn't seem fair, or logical. Thinking is how you improved, so it must be good. But ... it is easy to keep thinking about a new skill long after it has become "automatic." Letting go of thinking can be very difficult for the player that "likes learning," basically, likes thinking. Thinking may make you better, but over-thinking does not, and eventually, letting go of thinking makes you great. But it has to be done in the right sequence, at the proper time.

There are different kinds of thinking. Of learning. Some skills are physical skills. How to play a ball better. How to serve, how to put spin on your sever. How to add power, how to slice. Other skills are strategic, or tactical. Learning shot selection. Or psychological. How to control your emotions, and energy. Even spiritual.

**Especially spiritual.** Having the best reasons for playing tennis prevents a lot of problems less-pure motivations for playing cause later in performance. For example, having to win to prove your self-worth or gain approval may be a great motivation to work hard, and it may drive you to greatly improve your game, but may lead to a lot of choking when the match (your self-worth) is on the line. Thus, one of the answers to why I may practice better than I play.

**When to think?** We want to think when we are practicing. We want to think in lessons, on the practice court, hitting on the ball machine, when we are training. Even practice matches. There are some matches you should play to win (no thinking), some to learn (thinking). This is where we get better, build new habits, try new strategies, get stronger.

**When to not think?** We want to trust our skills, when we are playing competitively. In matches, in competition, we want to turn the thinking brain off. Let it go, let it flow. One of the biggest problems in competition is over-thinking. Paralysis by analysis. Choking is way too much of the wrong kind of thinking. And you feel like you can't stop.

This art of non-thinking, of getting into the zone, to being "match tough" takes practice too. You don't just decide to shut off your brain and get in combat mode. This is why when we start playing competitively, or pick it up again after some time off, we often don't play up to our potential, or have very good results. Getting match tough can take a while.

Non-thinking in matches is even true when it comes to tactics and strategy. The goal is to out-play your opponent, not out-think them. It is a performance sport, and if your tactics are automatic, and the "instinct" level, where you just make the play without "thinking," you are going to move quicker, play better, out maneuver someone who is burdened by thinking, a relatively slow process. Choking often happens when I, under pressure, suddenly start thinking about what was simply flowing before. Federer thinking about where to serve Djokovic at that crucial moment in the 5<sup>th</sup> set.

When I'm in the zone, not only do I make better tactical decisions, but it is much harder for my opponent to "read" my intentions. "Thinking" usually leads to over-playing, and thus giving away clues to your intentions.

Some people only play. That is what is fun for them. The game, the competition. No problem, but if they are not thinking, they are pretty much going to stay the same. Maybe you can be a little bit better 3.5, but without the hard work of change, and thinking, not much better. As long as everyone else does the same (so busy competing they don't have time to learn), again no problem. Just don't expect yourself to improve much. This is why so much of league tennis is about getting on the right team. Then you can "win" and you don't have to do the work of getting better.

Unfortunately, life seems to be about change. If you're not changing, perhaps your opponent or partner is. Everyone looks for an edge, eh? Especially if you are not successful. Competitive players are always looking for the edge.

**Winning.** That's where it starts to get tricky emotionally, and in how we feel about ourselves and our tennis, because we like to get better, and we're not really going to get too much better doing the same thing. "Insanity is doing the same thing and expecting a different result." So, we are really being unfair and unkind to ourselves if we expect better results, but don't put the time in to work on those results. Not really fair at all. Probably not the first time we didn't treat ourselves fairly, but hey, let's turn over a new leaf there too. Say, ... a New Year's resolution.

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## How Do The Pros Hit The Ball So Hard?

**Tennis is a control game.** Basically, if you like winning, you can only hit the ball as hard as you can get it in. And yet, when we watch on TV, the players are just pounding the ball back and forth. It sure looks like a power game. And yet, they are only playing the shots that they can make. How do they do it!?!?

If we watch a little bit closer to what these elite players are doing, especially to the rhythm of the stroke, we start to get a clue. To the keen observer, you start to notice that there are almost two strokes combined together, 1) the wind up, and 2) the contact / release. Just like a pitcher throwing, the wind up is really quite slow, and full of intention, and the release is quite quick, almost looking wild. Our eye is naturally drawn to the hitting of the ball, the release, and so, if we are not paying close attention, we think they pros are swinging fast at the ball. But they are not. They are loading, winding up, coiling, preparing, then holding or storing energy, and then, almost "too late," releasing it on the ball in explosive fashion. They are in essence, catching, then throwing. This slow approach to the ball is also where the aiming takes place. So yes, the release can be quite explosive, and the ball may travel very fast, but the catching portion (the wind up, the footwork, the aiming, the receiving – all the things that are going to lead to control – are

done in a slow, precise, smooth way). Basically, pros take care of controlling the shot first, then add the power. The better we do part one, the more we can release in part two. Preparation leads to usable power.

But the power is not a hit (hitting is when you swing at an object with a lot of speed, and strike it). They throw or release the ball, which is when you are "holding" onto the object, and then through a quick movement, achieve an exit velocity where you let go of the object and sling, fling, or throw it. Hitting is a direct, forward movement, throwing involves twisting and turning (much quicker). The pros release the ball. This allows them to take care of the primary objective in tennis, keep the ball in, and still add on power. Aim first, then fire. Any hunter or marksman knows that.

So work on your rhythm, slow and then quick. A smooth motion, not a fast or jerky motion. We can accelerate quickly by turning, rotating our arm, rather than swinging, which tends to be fast all the way though. Swinging leads to hitting, while rotating can be going very slow, or even backwards for a catch, and then accelerate for a release, a throw.

Smooth is quick. Quick is going slow well.

**Super-Fluid.** Here is a little trick I learned from the best tennis book out there, *Quantum Golf*. You say "super" on the wind up, and "fluid" on the contact and release. This keeps you smooth, and thus quick, without the jerks and over effort that lead to errors. "Super-fluid." Live it. Love it.

**The Blended Look.** When a player throws a ball, it looks very different than when a ball is hit. With a hit, the ball seems to leave the racquet immediately (it bounces away), where as a ball played by an elite player seems to stay on the racquet longer. It almost looks like the racquet is going to come over the net, not just the ball. The ball is held and released, rather than the ball bouncing away from a violent collision.

**Follow Through.** In fact, the quickest part of the stroke is after the ball is released. We touch or catch the ball going slowly, and then accelerate. The weight of the ball prevents the racquet head from going too fast, but we are speeding up to the point where the ball is released (the ball reaches escape velocity), it simply cannot remain on the strings any longer. The ball releases, spinning over the net. Then the racquet, without the resistance of the ball, really seems to pick up speed to the finish, causing the end of the stroke, the part we really notice, to look really aggressive and almost wild. But the ball is already gone. Already released.

**Heavy Ball.** Not only does throwing give the elite player more control, but it also creates the "heavy ball," the ball that when it hits your strings, seems to weigh more than a hit ball. The Ball is more than just fast. The speed and spin slams into you. The ball plows into your racquet, almost tearing the racquet out of your hand.

**Break Down Or Not.** To counteract this force, when it comes towards us, we are tempted to swing, match power with power, which is the exact opposite of the best solution. Our swing-type contact bounces the ball away, careening out of control. Or we try to block it, which is better, but the ball still bounces away from our strings without a lot of control. Instead, we need to catch, or absorb the incoming energy. The more incoming energy, the more we catch, and throw it (with spin) back at our opponent instead. See if they can handle our heat. "Take that, you arrogant fool!"

**Remember the two-part rhythm.** Slow and go. Catch and throw. Receive and send. Super-fluid. And, smooth is quick, quick is going slow well. Good luck out there!

## Winter Junior Program 2020

The 2020 Winter Junior Clinics began the week of **January 13<sup>th</sup>**, and will continue thru the week of **March 9<sup>th</sup>**. The 9-week program will be led by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson**. The Level 1 and II classes will be taught using aspects of the USTA Red, Orange, Green, Yellow (ROGY) 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:** add \$25 (\$15 for Lil' Ones). **Inclement Weather:** check [orindawoodstennis.com](http://orindawoodstennis.com) "Live Tennis Cam".