



# Orindawoods Tennis News

Aug 2020

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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*

## Club In Pandemic Times

### **The Joy of Tennis**

In a world where so much has been shut down, it is a real joy to play tennis. Lots of people have been inquiring about the club and taking lessons. Tennis is one of the safer activities you can do in life right now. Outside, fresh air, physical distancing most of the time. Limited shared surfaces.

And tennis at Orindawoods is particularly safe, because we are making sure that in the situations where physical distancing is difficult, we are at least wearing masks. Many people have asked about the continued use of masks when playing doubles, and we will continue to require this.

There are many instances when four people are on a court that physical distancing is not maintained. Most of it is not during the point, it's on the change overs, picking up balls, talking to your partner or entering and exiting the court. COVID doesn't seem to care about this, if you are too close, you're too close. The physical distancing definition of 6 feet is also for people that are not exercising. Heavy breathing, talking in a loud voice (singing), physical distancing can be as great as 30 feet. Wow, that's a long distance.

Physical distancing is the foundation of our country's campaign against COVID-19, and we are doing our best here at Orindawoods to support that. Countries where the percentage of people wearing masks is 98% in public, there is almost no COVID cases at all, even if at one time, there were a lot. "I protect you, you protect me."

In the short term, wearing masks can be a pain, but if we look at the long-term big picture, the benefits of wearing a mask are irrefutable.

**We get to play tennis! -- that is a huge deal.** Having to wear a mask -- a minor inconvenience.

Thank you for the fantastic work you have done in keeping each other safe. We can all be proud of how we have taken care of each other.

## COVID-19 Club Rules:

### **The Five Key Things:**

- Social distancing at all times
- Masks, wear masks when you are on the property. You can take masks off in only 3 instances (only when on the court: singles, members of the same household, practicing by yourself).
- Don't touch shared surfaces (especially tennis balls, but fences, doors, benches, etc...)
- No guests
- Play and Go (no socializing on the property).

And finally, **please don't come to the club if you are sick** (the obvious sixth thing, Duh!).

## **2020 Lesson Rates**

### **Keith & Patric**

1/2 hour private	\$45
1 hour private	\$80

### **Jennifer (is taking the summer off)**

1/2 hour private	\$40
1 hour private	\$75

Non-members add \$5

**Junior Clinic Pricing:** TBD

## **Weekly Lessons**

### **Hit and Fit:**

*Sadly, there is no Hit & Fit at this time due to COVID-19.*

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

Canceled due to COVID-19

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

Canceled due to COVID-19

## **Ball Machine**

Sadly, there is no ball machine use due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When restriction on shared surfaces loosen up, we will try to open the machine.

## **Court Washing**

We start our monthly court washing in May middays on Friday, the first and last Fridays of the month. Check the court scheduler to see what courts are being washed and when. Keeping the club clean is a high priority. Sorry for any inconvenience this "time out" causes.

## **Club Emails**

Keith has been sending out Club e-mails a couple times a week. He uses the reservation list as his e-mail list. If you are not getting these e-mails and want to be included, contact Keith. Past e-mails are available on the website, under information, e-mail history. A wide range of topics are discussed.

## **Quote of the Month:**

"Change is inevitable, growth is optional. If you push [change] under the rug, you end up with a lumpy rug."

The full rules are available at the club (posted in the glass case and the sign in board) and on [orindawoodstennis.com](http://orindawoodstennis.com) under "information" and "club rules." We're still doing great! Well played OW! Keep it up!

## Junior Program / Junior Lessons / Junior Tennis

Orindawoods is not holding a Junior Program this summer. The decision has not yet been made about the fall, but groups of kids together, where physical distancing is almost impossible to maintain, does not seem like it is the long-term best interests of Orindawoods. The safety of our students, their families, staff and homeowners seem more important than being able to offer these classes.



## Orindawoods Tennis Club

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PlayTennisConnect

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Orindawoods Tennis Club

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No staff right now

**Weekend Staff:**  
Peter Reaves

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Keith Wheeler

However, we are teaching private lessons to juniors, more than ever before. And we are very please with the results, and how well everyone is doing! Great progress can be made in the private lesson setting, much faster than in the group classes because of the focused, individual attention.

We are looking forward to resuming group classes when it seems to be safe to do so. Stay tuned, and we will let you know when that is possible.

### Social Events

Unfortunately, social events are still on hold, and it looks doubtful we will have any "parties" this year. Parties and gatherings of people seem to be the "super spreaders" in this pandemic, and how various groups mix, and COVID is spread from one group to another. We look forward to getting back to our social program when it is safe to do so. The health and well-being of our members, homeowners and staff comes first.

### Guests

Guests are still not allowed at Orindawoods. The mixing of groups is how the pandemic is spread, and keeping our tennis community somewhat isolated is one of our best strategies. Of course some members play elsewhere, with other people, but in general we are reducing our odds by limiting the number of people who can play at the Club.

### Tennis Club Pool

Due to the CC Health Requirements that pools be monitored to insure physical distancing, and the incredible difficulty in staffing that (getting someone to do it, plus the expense of paying them to sit out by the pool any hour its open) we are unable to open the Tennis Club Pool at this time. The monitor cannot be someone who is swimming or in the swimming party (a parent, baby sitter, guardian), so even if we allow only one family unit at a time in the pool area, there still needs to be a monitor.

We are working on a system where this might be able to work, and we can open the pool on a limited basis.

Sorry. I know this is yet another loss in this pandemic, but it is important that we maintain the safety of our members, homeowners and staff, and our overall community at large. Tough times, but we still live in paradise.

### Tennis Tip:

#### Two – One – Two

When we play a tennis ball, the ball comes to us. We watch it (some better than others), and figure out where we have to be to make contact with the ball. There is the ball, and the racquet, two separate objects. When they come together, for the briefest of moments, they become one object, they blend, move as one, and then they separate again, once again, a racquet and a ball. Two separate objects again. It's a two-one-two!

High speed photography and science tells us that this brief moment when they are together only lasts 3/1000 or 4/1000 of a second. In this short time, all the things you want to say to the ball: speed, spin, placement, deception, need to be communicated. So how you manage that very brief contact, is going to

determine how well you play the game.

Are you a good communicator? Does the ball hear you? Follow instructions?

At the simplest of levels, you probably just thought you were hitting the ball. Hoping to strike it in the right direction, with the speed you want. But again, through science and photography, we can see more accurately what is happening

when the ball and the strings meet (yes, technically, the ball doesn't hit the racquet, it hits the strings). And is the ball hitting the strings, or the strings hitting the ball?

When the ball gets to the racquet, the ball pushes the string bed back, and the frame of the racquet flexes back as well. The ball pushes against the strings, and the tension of the strings pushes back against the ball. The ball compresses, becomes "flatter," out of round. At this point, the ball seems to be winning, pushing the racquet and strings back.

But the racquet, strings and arm are strong, and after going back a ways (depending on how tightly the strings are strung, and how flexible the racquet it), they stop, everything poised in balance, and then the strings and racquet, that have been stretched back, start to recoil back the way they came, taking the ball, which is embedded in the strings with them. This recoil only lasts so long, and then the ball, which is not attached to the strings, is released to go back towards where it came from.

As I have described this many times, this is the catch, drive and release. It happens very fast, but we don't "hit" the ball, that is too simple of description, but we catch and throw the ball. We receive the ball, absorb the incoming energy, and use it, plus add some energy, then release the ball, to send the it back the other way.

Learning to do this effectively takes not only understanding what is happening (description above) but also how to do it in a way that works the best.

There are various attitudes or beliefs we can adopt that help us to do this (to understand the process and act appropriately), and there are physical tips and techniques we can use to help this interaction come about more effectively.

One of the techniques that really helps me is to hold the racquet very loosely. So loosely, that if you didn't make connection with the ball, the handle might very well slip out of your hand when you move it. The ball should feel like the handle is pushing back into your hand at impact, not that you are striking out at the ball. This is catching, or absorbing the ball. This way you are letting the strings, frame, and the muscles and tendons in your arm do what they are suppose to do, which is stretch and bend backwards, like a spring, so they can catch the ball, and build potential energy to send the ball back the other way.

Side note: If the ball is moving very slowly, we have to create this push back effect by moving our feet up past the ball on the lob, sitter or 2<sup>nd</sup> serve return.

As the body moves / rotates forward, and the racquet, strings and arm begins to recoil back forward from the initial impact of the ball, we overpower the ball, and begin to carry it back on the strings, towards the target. The ball and the racquet have become one, the ball is literally connected to our body and down into the ground (the other source of resistance we can push with our leg muscles against), through the strings, frame, hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, core, legs.

So on the catch, and in the drive, the racquet and the ball move together, as one. Two have become one.

Unlike the hand, the racquet and strings do not have an opposable thumb. There is no way that they can hold onto the ball and not let it escape. As the racquet and strings move forward, carrying the ball, due to the spring effect (ball, strings and racquet frame compressed and then springing back into their shape), the ball starts to move much faster than the racquet and strings, which cannot keep up with the ball as it reaches escape velocity. The ball is released or thrown forward. The one becomes two again, two separate objects, a racquet and a ball.

How we release the ball has a great deal to do with our success or failure from this point on. We can release a ball in a way that it retains the most power possible, or we can apply spin to the ball. If thrown properly, we can add both spin and speed, with the same sling-shot motion.

In golf, we have different clubs, and make swing adjustments to control or power the ball. In tennis, we use the same racquet on each shot, but we change how we grip it, move it, angle it and accelerate or decelerate it to change how the ball is released, and thus powered and controlled.

When we catch the ball, the strings dig into the felt of the ball and in essence, grab onto the ball. If the strings happen to be moving up, somewhat perpendicular to the flight of the ball, the strings will hold onto the ball and cause it to roll forward with topspin. If the strings were moving down, again, they would dig into the ball as the ball pressed into the strings, and the downward motion of the strings would cause the ball to roll with underspin. Similar things would be true for side spin, or slice on a serve. The angle of the racquet can also enhance this effect, so a more closed racquet face for topspin, a more open racquet face for underspin.

This gripping the ball with the strings is greatly enhanced if the ball is not struck directly. A direct impact with the strings going in the opposite direction as the ball tends to produce a bounce, and the ball bounces directly away, often with get power, but little spin. The interaction is very fast, with little hold on the ball. Little chance for the stings to grip the ball and roll it. We are hitting the ball, the ball is just bouncing off, not catching and throwing it. There is little chance to impart spin. This kind of impact could be useful on shots where I can hit directly into the court, like on a volley above the net, from a position close to the net, or on an overhead. Most other shots are going to require spin to keep them on target and going in.

### **The Tennis Tip**

Play the ball  
Watch it rise  
Watch it fall  
Be so wise:

Watch the ball  
Move your feet  
Float around  
Presence found

Enjoy the hit  
This is it!  
Happiness found  
On tennis ground

That means that most shots in tennis we are brushing the ball. Catching and rolling the ball, using the strings which dig into the felt on the ball, and as those strings slip off the ball, they impart a spin. We are not making "direct" contact with the ball, head-on collision, but actually having an "intentional" mishit. We are brushing the ball with the string bed.

The process of playing the ball causes two distinct objects (racquet and ball) to blend together in such a way, that for a brief moment, they are joined, they are one object, and then through an intentional release of the ball, we impart speed and spin so that when they separate back into two objects, the ball is driven over the net with speed and spin to a place of our choosing, and a place disguised from our worthy opponent until it is too late.

Good luck out there!

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## **Tennis Tip:**

### **Reading the Ball**

When the ball comes from them towards us, we need to go through several steps or phases to ensure that our return will be an effective one.

#### **The Phases of Recognition:**

##### **Preliminary phase:**

Event: ball is arriving at your opponent's racquet

What can you tell: You don't know which way the ball is going to go

What can you do: Position, then Split step, be ready to move as soon as you can tell which way the ball is going (Phase one). Positioning puts you in the place the ball is most likely to go. The Split Step prepares you to move, so that at the moment of recognition, you can act (carry out phase one).

##### **Phase One: Read**

Event: your opponent contacts the ball, and the first 10 feet or so of flight

What you can tell: which side the ball is going, perhaps short or deep, roughly how far away to the side.

What you can do: turn, start moving in the direction of the ball, but don't commit to a final destination, you are getting closer for a better look. Like a predator staking its prey, you are poised but not yet pouncing.

##### **Phase Two: Adjust**

Event: when the ball is 10 to 30 feet off your opponent's racquet, moving towards your side of the net

What can you tell: At this point, you can determine quite accurately where you are going to need to be to receive and stroke the ball

What can you do: adjust your initial movement to plan how to arrive right on time with the ball.

##### **Phase Three: Final adjustments, focus**

Event: the ball and you are arriving at the contact point

What can you tell: You are pretty darn sure where the ball is going to be, and you are prepared, but you still have some operational flexibility (feet and hands) to adjust to the ball, without compromising your rhythm and form.

What can you do: Make final adjustments, keep your focus on the contact point. This is when most errors occur, you either chase the ball (lose form and / or rhythm) or take your eyes off the contact and look to where you hope to hit it (often resulting in a miss hit or miss direction).

##### **Phase Four: Success!**

It's so tempting to say "victory", but victory is often beyond our control, and depends on outside factors, like our opponent's actions, while success, succeeding in what we are trying to do (in this case, read the shot, and react appropriately), is completely within our control. Well played!

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#### **Sixty-Nine, *The Tao te Ching*, by Lao Tzu**

The generals have a saying:  
"Rather than make the first move  
it is better to wait and see.  
Rather than advance an inch  
it is better to retreat a yard."

This is called  
going forward without advancing,  
pushing back without using weapons.

There is no greater misfortune  
than underestimating your enemy.  
Underestimating your enemy  
means thinking that he is evil.  
Thus you destroy your three treasures  
and become an enemy yourself.

When two great forces oppose each other,  
the victory will go  
to the one that knows how to yield.