



# Orindawoods Tennis News

December 2021 Vol: 27, Issue 12

Orindawoods Tennis Club: 925-254-1065; [www.orindawoodstennis.com](http://www.orindawoodstennis.com)

*"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it" – Celia, As You Like It, Act II, Scene IV*

## Tis' the Season...

### Holiday Wishes

As we enter the holiday season, starting with Hanukkah this week, moving through Christmas and the New Year's celebrations, the staff of Club, and the owners of the Orindawoods, would like to wish you all a very happy holiday season. Stay safe, have fun, and play tennis.

— Keith and Patric :-)

### Reindeer Games

In honor of Mike and Lysbeth McNeil, the Orindawoods Tennis Club invites you to join our annual (created by Lysbeth many years ago) Reindeer Games tennis round robin and happy hour.

On Sunday, December 12, at 2-4 p.m., we will play a doubles round robin to be followed by good cheer on the deck. This event is free, just bring your red nose and a great party attitude. To sign up, e-mail Keith ([keith@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:keith@orindawoodstennis.com)).

### Please Hang Up the Squeegees

We have squeegees on most of the courts to help you move the occasional irritating puddle. Just a quick reminder that squeegees work a lot better if they are round. They stay round by hanging them up on the fence, and not letting them dry sitting on the ground (drying this way makes them flat). It's a little thing, but it makes a world of difference next time you or someone else needs to push some water around and move a pesky puddle. Thx!

### Fit and Hit

Our Fit and Hit Exercise class will return in January, just in time to recover from the holidays. Hit and Fit is a combination of strengthening exercises using TRX and a tennis workout, hitting off the ball machine. Classes will be held Wednesday and Friday. Here is the schedule:

<b>Wednesday 11:30-1</b>	1.5 hours	cost: \$20
<b>Friday 11-12:30</b>	1.5 hours	cost: \$20

Hope you can join us for a fun, healthy workout.

### Pickleball Playdays and The List

We are setting up a list of people interested in playing a weekly game of pickleball, or more often. We are planning to send out an invite each week, and hopefully get a consistent group of people coming to our two playdays, so everyone will know there is a game available if they want to play at that time. Our two pickleball playdays down on lovely Court One at the Orindawoods Pickleball Center are:

<b>Saturdays</b>	<b>12-2 p.m</b>
<b>Sundays</b>	<b>1-3 p.m.</b>

If you would like to be on the pickleball play list, just contact Keith ([keith@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:keith@orindawoodstennis.com)). and he will get you on the weekly invite. If you want to just drop in and play, that is possible too, but we want to guarantee there will be people there to play. Ideally, we would like to have a beginner court and a more advanced court, minimum. We can have up to four courts on Court One, so plenty of room to grow. It's a fun game, easy to learn, and you'll catch right on especially if you have played tennis.

### 2021 Club Rates

#### Keith & Patric tennis lessons:

½ hour private	\$45
1 hour private	\$80

**Club Dues:** \$140 / month

**Guests:** \$10 (1 visit / week). Pay Station located by the Pro Shop door.

### Weekly Lessons

Ladies clinic:	Tues 9:30
Men's clinics:	Thurs 9:30

**Cost:** \$10

### Junior Program

Our Winter Program will start up in mid-January. Registration begins in December. Check the Junior Page on the website for all the details. [Junior Program Page](#).

### Ball Machine

Ball Machine Club	\$110 /year
Ball Machine / hour	\$8

- Ball Machine Club runs thru 3/30/22
- Reserve Court 3 to use the machine.
- Reservations are for **1 hour**.
- Pay using Pay Station / credit card
- iPhone app: **Like My Drill**

### Racquet Services

Head Pro Patric Hermanson restrings racquets and is a Babolat dealer to meet all your racquet & paddle needs.

### COVID, Masks, etc...

Currently masks are REQUIRED INDOORS at OWTC.

### Greystone Parking

The Club's overflow parking is on Greystone Terrace, across the street. This has worked out very well in the past, but it is **VERY IMPORTANT that we only park on the right-hand side of the street going up the hill**. We must not block the emergency vehicles.

### Quote of the Month:

*"Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will control your life and you will call it fate." — Carl Jung*



## Orindawoods Tennis Club

650 Orindawoods Dr.  
Orinda, CA 94563

Phone:  
925-254-1065

Website:  
[orindawoodstennis.com](http://orindawoodstennis.com)

Smart Phone Reservation App:  
PlayTennisConnect

**Facebook:**  
Orindawoods Tennis Club

**Executive Tennis Director:**  
Keith Wheeler  
[keith@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:keith@orindawoodstennis.com)

**Head Pro:**  
Patric Hermanson  
[patric@orindawoodstennis.com](mailto:patric@orindawoodstennis.com)

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Keith Wheeler

### Tennis Club Directory Online Version

On the website under "Membership Services" there is a page "[Tennis Directory](#)" that has a link to the tennis club address book. You need to sign-in to access this information.

### Silvercreek HOA Management

Accounting and billing questions, contact:  
916-877-7793 or  
[accounting@sc-manage.com](mailto:accounting@sc-manage.com)

If you don't have a paddle, we have ones to borrow while you are beginning. Patric also has four different demos, if you are interested in buying a paddle.

## A Court Reservation Favor

Next time you get ready to make your court reservations (no doubt down to the second, 169 hours in advance of when you want to play), we ask that you reserve courts 4-7 before reserving courts 1 or 3. Of course at the busy times of the day (9-12 in the morning), this is not possible. We take what we can get. This congestion can also happen with the junior program on some afternoons.

But if there are lots of courts open, say midafternoon or on the weekends, or evenings in the summer, we ask that you reserve court 4-7 first. After 12 noon Court One can be used for pickleball. Since it is the only court we can play pickleball on, it would be considerate to leave it for pickleball players if you can.

Court Three is the only court where the ball machine can be used, so for the same reasons, if that court can be your last choice, that would be great, and much appreciated. Of course, in the evening, there are no ball machine advanced reservations, so treat Court Three the same as Court Two.

We understand that there are legitimate reasons why you want to play on Court One or Court Three (less windy, more private, for example) and we are not saying that you can't. Only that you make that choice thoughtfully, with good reason. That's how we roll at Orindawoods, thinking of others. Thank you!

## Family Tennis

As we enter the holiday season, I often think of family tennis. A father and son, husband and wife, mom and daughter, sometimes family doubles. And other generations get involved too, and sometimes cousins, aunts, uncles, grandkids and other visitors. People have time off, and they take to the courts on those brisk, cool, but clear and beautiful winter days. It always warms my heart, almost like sitting around the fireplace. (Remember, you don't need to pay a guest fee for out-of-town, extended family guests at OW, it's part of membership).

Our upcoming Reindeer Games is a bit like that. The Orindawoods family getting together to celebrate the holidays. So many thanks to Lysbeth McNeil for dreaming that up, all those years ago. It's a tradition, even when it rains. This year, when we celebrate the Reindeer Games, we will do it thinking of Lysbeth and Mike, and the joy they brought us, and continue to deliver, over many years.

And The Reindeer Games, or the Rain-oh-dear Games, or the Rain-out Games, it's all part of the fun, the uncertainty, and yet still the feelings of the season. Family tennis is like that, there is a clear day, perhaps somewhat unexpected, and we choose to spend it together on the court. Can't always plan it, can't always happen, but there is the joy of being out there when it happens. That's the spirit!

I can think of many OW families, past and present, out there playing during the holidays. Or the families that share a trip back down memory lane with grown children who are back in town. Good times.

Did you know, I'm a tennis player, and a tennis pro, because of family tennis? Patric too! How many of us owe our tennis roots to family tennis? I'm sure the number is quite large. My dad played, so I wanted to play too.

There are things that you take for granted when you are a kid, but the fact that my dad loved tennis, and that he was a high school teacher, and had afternoons off to spend with his son, made my tennis career. We were out there every day, often for several hours. He was my practice partner, the person I spent more time on a court than any other, even to this day. It's been a long time since the last time we were able to play tennis. He had problems with his feet and had to stop playing when he was about 65. By then, I was starting on my tennis pro career, which was quite a surprise to me (that wasn't my plan, as much as I had one). Yet I still wonder how much of a surprise it was to him? Answers I will never know. I had

spent my whole youth fast-tracking to something grand, some big career, chasing the grades, and whatever I was supposed to do, and then one day, I just stepped off the train and got off. I wasn't happy.

I do remember thinking my dad would be disappointed that I chose tennis, being an intellectual and all that, but instead, he was quite pleased. Reminded me of when we played every day, we didn't talk about tennis all that much, or technique hardly at all, there was just this silent support and approval. Kids don't want to let their parents down,

and parents just want their kids to be happy (however they define that). Thank goodness mine defined happy as happy, and not some career with a fancy title that drove me crazy, sad or depressed. Family tennis. Enjoy the season.

## **Impressions from the USPTA Convention.**

I attended the USPTA Fall Conference on November 6th at the new Bay Club in South San Francisco (best looking tent you'll ever see: 10 courts, 16 pickleball courts, small gym, and locker room). It's set next to the Cow Palace, a very nice indoor facility. There were a lot of talks and demonstrations of drills, plus a fun pickleball hour, when we all played together. Lots of fun to play pickleball with a lot of really great tennis players. The level was quite high. So, if you have played tennis (I'm talking to the choir here), pickleball can be a whole lotta of fun in a big hurry. Give it a try!

There was a junior tennis clinic demonstration by a local, NorCal pro, Phil Graham, that was so impressive, not for what he was teaching (which was useful), but how smooth he played the game. It really reminded me, visually, of what we are chasing here as players in pursuit of mastery. He never looked rushed, never looked out of control, or wild, or trying too hard. He looked like a "natural" (my definition: someone who has practiced a lot). He was playing points with some of his top juniors, who were good, ranked kids, but were always "trying too hard," and had not yet learned the refined movements of a seasoned player. He was so fluid he almost looked lazy, but clearly wasn't. Just efficient.

I wish I had a video to show you (a picture is worth a 1,000 words), but I can describe a few of the qualities that make such smooth play possible, and thus, hopefully help us all get there. Me too!

**Being prepared.** To look calm and make it look easy, like you aren't doing much of anything, you have to do something: you have to be ready. That is, in position and ready to move. And to move lightly and quickly, with small steps that don't seem to be a big effort, but gracefully carry you across the court. Almost like you are out for a stroll. As physics tells us, "a body in motion tends to stay in motion, a body at rest, tends to stay at rest." It's easier to move smoothly, if you are already moving smoothly. This means timing your split step just right, and thinking of tennis as a dance, where you are always flowing, as the "music" (point) plays. The split step starts before the opponent hits the ball, so you are already in motion, not just standing around waiting impatiently for the "exciting part" (hitting).

When to have your feet land on the split step is somewhat debated, but the most important thing is to be moving, so you can keep moving, smoothly, as you go to the ball. The simplest way to time the split is have your feet touch the ground when the opponent touches the ball. Pros seem to still be slightly in the air at contact (so a slight bit later), but close enough. Even a bit early or late it better than nothing. The idea (the self-test) is to be able to move appropriately to the ball when you can tell which way their shot is going. If you can make an appropriate response, you are doing the split step right. If you move too soon, and / or the wrong way, you are too early, and will have to recover your balance, and gather yourself and change direction, to go after their shot. If you split too late, you are not ready to move when you need to "go!" The most common mistake with the split step, is players take one too many steps trying to get into position, rather than get ready. It is much more important to be ready, that be in "perfect position", but not ready (which of course, is not perfect position at all).

**Turn.** Part of moving gracefully is to face the direction you are going to move to play the ball. Running half sideways is hardly graceful or efficient. This seems so easy, certainly logical, but very hard to do. We face where the ball is coming from (our opponent), or where we want to hit, too long, rather than face where contact should be (to the side).

**Start soon, start slowly.** While your body and feet start to move towards the ball, the best players start their arms and upper torso moving. The goal is to get the hand / racquet in the right position to play the ball right before rotating the racquet to contact. One of the reasons we often feel "late" in tennis, is that our hand is too far away from the contact point right before contact and we feel like we have to rush to get in the right place. This causes a swing, rather than a stroke, with the resulting collision and loss of control. We want to coil, and move slowly, like we are catching the ball, our hand in and out in front by the time the ball arrives. Just like catching, our hands are soft and moving slowly as the ball approaches. In order to pull this off, you have to start your motion soon, and move slowly, softly.

**The problem** is, you don't know, at this early stage, where you and the ball are going to end up. The tendency is to wait until you move your feet, and the ball gets closer, and then it all becomes a rush, we feel late, and the stroke breaks down in a mad, storming-of-the-gates dash to the ball. We have to trust, when we start early and slowly, that we will "drift" into the proper place, while our arms and hands prepare to receive the ball. Think Federer, glide.

Of course, we are not here to merely catch the ball, we are here to send it back over the net. So, in this coil and wind up, is the foundations of the throw, or the sending the ball back over the net. Much like setting a spring on a mouse trap, we move slowly to line up and store the potential energy of the trap, that can then be released at the proper time.

**Smooth Acceleration.** We don't want to slam into the ball. That causes too much bounce, and bounce is very hard to control (tennis is a control game — see below). We want to grab the ball and sling it. A catch and a throw. In order to do this, we have to receive the ball slowly and indirectly, so it doesn't just bounce away. Then we accelerate while it is on the strings to throw it back over the net. In fact, the power we want comes from acceleration, not speed. A swing goes fast all the time, a throw goes slow and then accelerates, resulting in effective, precise force.

We aim, and coordinate better, when we are going slow. Then, we have to speed up to throw (release) the ball. Like throwing a ball with a lacrosse stick, the basket holding the ball and then as you whip it around, the basket lets go.

Contact should be soft and smooth, a blending of the ball and the strings. A rolling, brushing, absorbing, and not a Big Bang. A tennis racquet is a sting instrument, played like a guitar, strumming, and not a drum, that is pounded.

There is a collision between the ball and the racquet in tennis, but the more you can make it feel like a catch and a throw, the better you will play. You will have more control for sure, but also more useful power and spin.

**When Do You Get to Hit?** Surprisingly, I recently heard a description by a baseball batting coach that “hitting” a baseball was very similar. He tossed a ball up in front of him, and caught it, and only then turned his arm and followed through, saying this is the way you “hit” a baseball. Batters bring the bat forward, they don’t swing it forward. Even batting in baseball, is really a catch and a throw, not a hit. Tennis players like Phil Graham do the same. You can too.

**The Ball or You?** The real question is, who is in control, you or the ball? Are you stroking the ball the way you want, slow, soft and smooth, with quickness at contact; or chasing the ball (the way the ball wants) and striking it out of aggression or desperation? Are you playing the ball, or the ball playing you? Good luck out there.

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## Strategy & Tactics

*“Strategy and tactics are for amateurs. Professionals focus on logistics.” – Military adage*

What is the place of strategy and tactics in modern (tennis) warfare? It’s a good question. Most players love strategy and tactics, a good plan. Out think your opponent. Trick ‘em. I think that is one of the reasons people like football so much, all the plays, teamwork, moves and counter moves, and all that. Same for tennis.

But what is strategy? What is tactics? The words are used interchangeably, but they don’t mean exactly the same.

**Strategy:** a plan, method, or series of maneuvers or stratagems for obtaining a specific goal or result.

**Tactics:** the individual maneuvers themselves.

In the grand scheme of winning a tennis match, just how important are strategy and tactics? I remember Chris Evert saying, “It is pretty easy to know where to hit in tennis, where the open court is, the real question is can you do it?”

**Strategy.** At the strategy level, tennis is primarily a defensive game. What do I mean by that?

With the advent and popularity of pickleball, I have reflected a lot on different games I have played in my life. And it often comes down to one question, or one tactical situation to best describe their nature.

In tennis, if you get to a situation where you are not sure if you should go for it or not, it is almost always best to NOT go for it. Took years to learn that, especially as a teenager. Same with golf. These are primarily defensive games (mistakes are easy to make, play for consistency). However, from what I can tell so far in pickleball, given the same scenario, should I or should I not go for it, the odds seem to favor going for it. That’s not to say there are not times when you very much should play it safe (low balls in the kitchen). It’s just on those 50/50s balls, where you must choose, I say go for it! Same in ping pong, or volleyball These are more offensive games (it is easier to hit winners).

Building a strategy around how to play tennis always involves managing your mistakes, even when attacking.

**Tactics.** How that plays out in tactics, is you don’t try to rip winners from the baseline, or swing at or blast your volleys. When you attack a short ball, you pick a style in which you can make the shot. Higher ball, perhaps you go for it more. Low ball, you chip and come in. Maybe set yourself or your partner up for a volley or overhead on the next shot. Our tactics in tennis are often combinations of play. One shot tries to set up the next, rather than blast away, chasing illusive winners, right now.

This is where comparisons between tennis and chess come in (though in truth, grand masters in chess are thinking ten, twenty moves ahead, and tennis rallies infrequently last longer than four or five shots).

**Preparation.** So, the way to prepare for success is exactly that: how we prepare. In military terms, logistics and training. How we learn the game, the strokes we have at our disposal, our physical fitness, the weapons we have, and don’t have, and then how we use them. Nutrition, pre-match routines. Even arriving on time and getting a good warm up, practicing every shot, the scenarios you plan to use during the course of the match. How you see yourself winning.

I have found in my life in tennis, that the higher the level, the simpler the strategy and resulting tactics get. The focus is much more on execution, playing the ball well, within the framework of a simple, achievable plan. The most common thing I hear elite players say in the heat of battle is, “watch the ball, and move your feet.” “Slow down,” or “take a deep breath” are other favorites. Not complex, not technical. Boring? Yep. Effective? Yep.

A good plan, even a great plan, with lousy weapons, fitness, or techniques, doesn’t really save the day.

More than one coach memorably said, “You can’t make chicken salad out of chicken shit.” In the end, all alchemy fails; we can’t turn lead into gold, no matter how fancy the formula.

**Shot Selection:** Let’s say you are a 4.0. If a makeable shot comes to you, there is a shot you can hit that is better than your level, say a 4.5 shot, your weapon, your favorite shot. There is a shot you can hit that is right at your level, 4.0, and there is a tougher shot, that if you hit, it goes over more like a 3.5 or 3.0 shot. Kind of weak, often inconsistent.

Here’s the problem, a good opponent is going to cover your 4.5 shot, probably your 4.0 shot too. Do you let yourself become a weaker player, by playing “strategically” and hitting for the “open” court with your 3.0 shot, or do you play the best you can, at the highest level possible, and play the 4.5 shot? Most successful, elite players, do the latter. They pick excellence over strategy. Their tactics is to play the best shot they can. Even play the ball right to their opponent. They know, better is better. Be the best player you can. If you’re in a 4.0 match, and you have a 4.5 shot, play it.

The most successful strategy, the one that most pros use on the tour, when losing, is to try to simply play better. To lift the level of their game. To bring their best game forward. Too simple? I don’t think so, and neither do they.