



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

Twilight Tennis Summer Season

One of our great traditions here at Orindawoods Tennis Club is our Twilight Social Tennis BBQs. Each summer we have several of these relaxing, fun, tennis evenings.

Our next Twilight Tennis BBQ is Sunday, September 23rd, with tennis from 4-6 p.m., followed by a BBQ on the club deck. Then on Oct 7th.

A Twilight is an awesome way to spend a Sunday evening with friends and tennis partners. Players can meet other club members and find new tennis partners. And the food ain't bad either. Non-players are also welcomed for dinner. (No non-players for tennis, please. ☺)

The two remaining Twilight Tennis parties this summer are:

Sept 23	Sunday	4-8 p.m.	\$20
October 7	Sunday	4-8 p.m.	\$20

A Twilight is two hours of mix-and-match tennis, followed by BBQ on the Club deck. We serve a choice of filet mignon or chicken breast, with salad, baked beans, dessert and all the fixin's. Bring your own beverage.

To register, contact Keith. keith@orindawoodstennis.com. Cost \$20 ea.

Orindawoods Junior Championships

Every year the club hosts the Orindawoods Junior Championships. Our tournament is part of the USPTA Contra Costa County Junior Circuit. This year's tournament will be held on October 19-21. You can register for this event on the TopDog Tennis site under NorCal USPTA Jr. circuit.

Questions? Ask Keith or Patric for more information if you would like to play. We love hosting the tournament and supporting junior tennis, especially because it serves the more entry-level junior players, which is where most players are at in their development. There needs to be more support for the juniors who are just starting out in competitive tennis.

Note: The tournament will use all the Club's courts on Friday afternoon / evening Oct 19, and Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 20-21. Thanks for your support of junior tennis. It's the future of our game, and of our Club.

No Refrigerator Cop Outs, Please

Toss your left-over food, or take it home. Don't leave it in the Club refrigerator for someone else to "feel bad" throwing "perfectly-good / children-starving-Africa" food away. I know, I know, you don't want to eat half a German Chocolate Cake and it's 10,000 hip-bound calories (not on my diet) all by yourself while you watch bad TV sitting on a very comfy reclining sofa. But leaving it here is just passing the buck. Think about it, you probably wouldn't eat open food out of a community refrigerator, so don't pretend others will. Toss it! It's tough, I feel your pain (often I toss it), but toss it anyway. Your conscience will be clean and your hips slim. A true win / win. Thanks!

Stroke Mechanics Tip:

Touching Not Trying Catching Not Hitting

The nature of contact is crucial in tennis. The interaction between the racquet and the ball or, more precisely, the strings of the racquet and the

Off Season Monday Night Tennis.

With the conclusion of Monday Team Tennis, we are once again hosting our Monday Night Tennis social play for those who register. If you are interested in getting in the rotation, let Keith know. Once again, superstar Denis Weil will organize our off-season tennis social night. Thanks Denis!

The Pool Scene

The Orindawoods Tennis Club pool will be open through the end of October. The exact closing date is somewhat dependent on the weather. And we know how the weather can be...

Pool Rules

- Hours: dawn to dusk, spa until 9 pm.
- Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult
- No Lifeguard (best to have a swim buddy and not swim alone)
- No running
- No diving
- No glass in the pool area
- No pets in the pool area (sorry Rover)
- The gas BBQ is for Club Events only, but there is a charcoal BBQ for your use. Bring your own charcoal.
- Guest kids (14 & under): \$1, adults \$5
- * No Marco Polo (keep your staff sane)

Court Washing

The courts are washed on the last and first Fridays of the month. Court washing not only keeps the courts clean, but protects the surface. We also blow the courts off Mondays and Fridays at 7:30am

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!

Quotes of the Month:

"To do things right, first you need love, then technique. – Antoni Gaudi

"Pain is pressure combined with the intent to pull away. If you don't intend to pull away, then it is just pressure."

ball, is fundamental to our success. In past articles, we have talked about how we want the ball to roll, and not to bounce, off the strings. That the tennis racquet is a string instrument that should be "strummed" like a guitar, and not hit like a drum. We brush the ball, not strike it.

Let's look at this concept of contact in even more depth here to help us understand what we are looking for.

The Goal: First and foremost, tennis is not merely about the racquet contacting the ball, but about placing that ball in a part of the court with speed, spin, accuracy and even deception. Hitting the ball is easy, playing it with spin, to a certain location, is difficult and takes years to master. Of course, you must make contact, but tennis is so much more than coordination and making contact. That is just the simplest, most dumb-downed version of understanding the game. We can do better.

The racquet is a trampoline, and the ball is made of pressurized, bouncy rubber. This means there is lots of bounce, or power, built into the very nature of the game. And every contact. Except for the serve, the ball is already moving and, thus lending lots of power to the system from the start. Just having the ball hit the racquet often gives it enough energy to go back over the net, and beyond. On a very hard serve and return, it is difficult to block the ball and not have it go way too far over the end line.

What is our part in contact? What should be left to other tools and forces? As stated above, most of the energy, or energy producing elements, are already present in the system (the ball is moving back and forth in tennis already). What is needed is the harnessing of the energy and the directing of the ball. We need to stop the ball that is coming towards us, turn it around, and send it back to where we want on the opponent's side of the court. Energy, we largely have, what we need is direction and spin. And even deception and disguise.

We don't need to so much "hit" the ball as to touch it, brush across it, roll around it, and cause it to spin, as well as point the stings towards where we would like the ball to go over the net towards a target.

Stay on My Side Of The Net: For me, when I focus too much on what I'm trying to do to my opponents, when I think of projecting the shot, penetrating the court, or hitting/blasting the shot at my opponents, I get too involved in the energy part of the equation. It's overkill, and diminishing returns (the harder I try, the worse I get). There is enough energy, for the most part, already. It's this effort or trying -- this hitting -- that leads to most errors.

The Challenge: If instead, I catch or touch the ball, applying pressure to the ball in the proper direction for spin and not forward for force, that I begin to reach my potential as a player. So strong is my mistaken belief about what makes the ball go forward (i.e. the need to hit), that I almost need to forget I'm trying to hit it over the net, or past my opponent. Just focus on trying to get the right touch on the ball.

The problem is in the midst of all this self-control, if I don't believe touching the ball is enough to get it to go over the net or fast enough to get by my opponent, my form will break down and I will swing, hit and lose control. Through practice I need to learn to trust the contact and my stroke. Repetition leads to confidence, and the ability to go easy and get the proper connection. Start slow, build confidence & trust.

Ball on The Strings: The strings should move across the ball, from the low inside to the high outside of the ball for topspin, and from the high outside to the low inside for underspin. On topspin I'm pushing the racquet away from me (thrusting, driving) while, on the underspin I'm pulling, or bringing it in towards me. So the pressure on the ball from the stings should be across the ball, and not on the back of the ball. The sideways movement will cause the strings to grip the ball and roll it. As our arm goes out to the side (topspin), it naturally raises. As our arm comes in (underspin), it naturally goes lowers. I don't need, or deliberately want to, raise or lower my arm, just move the arm in or out, depending on the spin you want. The average player moves the racquet far too much forward, and far too much up and down. As my arm extends, it naturally rolls. My palm going from under the ball, to the back of the ball, to over the ball, as my arm reaches out for a topspin stroke. This is the exact action that I want. It's natural, but not emotionally or psychologically natural to let it happen the natural way. Tightening, or muscling, destroys the movement and my timing.

The Nature of Strings: As a side note, this is why stings move (and ultimately break from rubbing on each other). The strings move the ball, but the ball also moves



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Weekly Lessons

Hit and Fit:

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

Friday 10:30-11:30 a.m. \$15
Saturday 7:30-9 a.m. \$20

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

the strings. The popular poly strings slip and slide more, and return to their starting position better, thus imparting even more spin on the ball.

Catching: If I was catching a ball, I would have soft hands and cushion the incoming flight and force of the ball. I want to think this way as I touch, or move, across the ball. I wouldn't go forward if I was catching the ball, and I don't want to think forward when I'm playing tennis. That is not to say there isn't forward motion in the system (natural rotation of the arm brings the racquet head forward without me realizing it), but I don't want forward action to come from swinging my arm and thus, racquet, forward.

These are tough concepts to master. It's a lot easier to just think, "I'll hit the ball." But "hitting the ball" just doesn't work very well. When you say, "I'll just hit the ball", you really have to add, "and hope something good happens," because you are giving up much of your control over the outcome.

And so, we begin on the journey to excellence through touching, grabbing and rolling the ball (with the strings). Good luck out there!

Strategy Tip:

Mind the Triangles of Doubles

Before the point begins, when I'm waiting to return serve, I have an awareness of the position of the net person facing me. Is the middle open, or closed? The answer to that question has a lot to do with how I plan to return the ball. Especially on a second serve, where I generally can control where I return the shot. The same goes for any crosscourt doubles rally. What's open, what isn't. The alley?

The Triangle: The space that I'm looking for, I call "the triangle". If I think of the net and the center service line as two sides of the triangle, then I connect the two sides with the hypotenuse, which is basically where I think the net person can reach / cover with one step (Fig. 1). It's where you can hit the ball as close to the net person as possible and still get it by them, or be effective (they miss the volley or hit a weak one). Basically, that triangle tells me how much of the middle is open. This is the area I want the ball to pass through (think of it as a pitch crossing the plate in baseball), when I'm hitting the ball in the middle of the court. If the area is large (Fig. 1), then it is my go-to target. If it is small (Fig. 2), I need to think of ways to convince my opponent to make it larger in the future. Lob? Alley shot?

View From the Net: If I'm the net player, then I want this triangle to be as small as possible (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). That means I'm controlling the middle and increasing my chances of winning. Fig. 4 is bad news for net players. Stay up!

Shot Properties: Naturally, height and speed of the shot help to determine the size of the triangle, as a ball that is going faster, or at an uncomfortable height (low or high), is more likely to be effective. And so, there is some risk in playing your shot into the triangle because, if you don't hit the ball well, then what appears open is just setting the net person up.

Where the ball is coming from, and whether it is a forehand or a backhand, also shapes the triangle (the target area). And, thus, the defensive positioning.

Control the Middle: As I discussed at length last month, the middle is where winning takes place. The team that controls

the middle, controls the match. Playing the ball in this space, even if the net person is able to get it, has the best chance for long-term success.

As I discussed in past newsletters, many people just think "hit crosscourt, avoid the net player." Seems smart, except it doesn't lead to as much success as getting the ball through the middle. A well-honed doubles team will set up the back person so that if

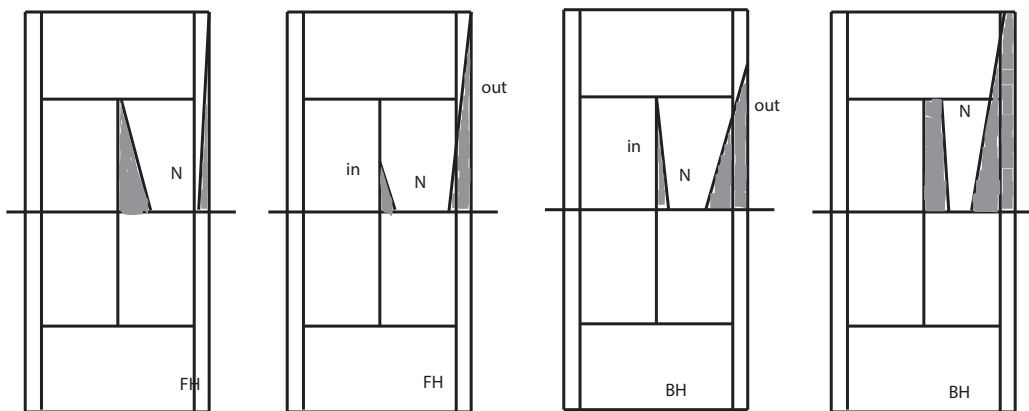


Fig. 1
FH return
Net person covers the alley

Fig. 2
FH return
Net person central

Fig. 3
BH return
Net person covers the middle

Fig. 4
Net person far off the net covering the lob

you avoid the net player, you are hitting it right to their strength. This is not so great for winning points. Better to find this seam in between the players, the soft underbelly of most defenses.

Final consideration, what if you miss (Fig. 2&3)? If the ball goes wide of the mark and you are going down the alley side, the shot will land out (Fig. 2&3), where as if you are going for the middle and you miss, it is still "in." Thus, less risk playing the middle. Always keep in mind, the net person hitting the ball is not the worst outcome. It is better than hitting your shot in the net, wide, long or, most of the time, even to the back-court player.

So next time you are about to play a groundstroke with the net person on the other side of the net facing you in doubles, consider the size of the triangle. It's a very useful image for shot selection.

Tennis and Cons

There is a saying that "you can't con an honest man." It is only the person who wants to get ahead by cutting corners that can be tricked into a "something for nothing" scheme where, invariably, you get what you paid for. Nothing, or not much.

Tennis is a short con game. Our opponents are trying to get you to change your stroke for the sake of hitting the ball. They are trying to convince you that it is hitting the ball that is important, rather than hitting it in (with pace, spin, control and deception). They are offering you a short cut, a piece of really cheap water-front property in south Florida (that, just so happens, to be a swamp with gators, and not only that, but under water). "Have I got a deal for you!"

Tennis, as a game, is not about contact, but what you do with that contact. Where and how you place the ball back to your opponent.

There is another saying, that "when you take a short cut, you will end up somewhere" (not where you intended, but somewhere). Ha ha!

That's exactly what happens in tennis. When you take the short cut of "just hitting the ball" you often do (hit the ball), but your ball doesn't end up where you wanted it to. Or how you wanted it to go. When you contact the ball, it may fly long, or straight into the net. You have forgotten that your key duty is to aim the ball and control the nature of contact (see above). It is true we need to make contact, but we also need to aim, impart spin, and deceive our opponents.

Cons and temptations often have an element of truth ("well, duh, you have to hit the ball"), but that truth is not the whole story. Don't fall for the lie, for the con, for the temptation. Keep the big picture in mind.

Excellence is about making shots, not making contact. Don't get conned!

Fall Junior Program 2018

The 2018 Fall Junior Clinics began the week of **August 27th**, and will continue thru the week of **December 10th**. There are no classes the week of **November 19-23**. The 15-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>
I	<u>Lil' Ones</u>	Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm	\$175*	\$275*
	<i>The Lil' Ones class 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>			
II	<u>Future Stars Group</u>	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm	\$345*	N/A
	<i>The Future Stars Group 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>			
III	<u>Tennis Development Group</u>	Thursdays 4-5:30pm	\$345*	N/A
	<i>In the Tennis Development Group 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>			
IV	<u>Tournament Training Group</u>	Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm	\$435*	N/A
	<i>The Tournament Training Group 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.