



Orindawoods Tennis News

March 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

New Associate Pro

Jennifer Conway

Jen has enjoyed her first month here at Orindawoods teaching in the junior program and beginning to teach private lessons. And it has been great having her here.

If you would like to book a lesson with Jen, contact her at jenniferlynconway@gmail.com. Jen generally teaches during the week midday, 12-2 p.m. Jen would love to help you out!

Get in Shape!

Hit and Fit

Twice a week the Club offers a great exercise class, Hit and Fit. The two-part goal of the class is to 1) improve our tennis, and 2) to get in better shape. We do drills using the Playmate Ball machine for about 50% of the class, and the other 50% of the time we do strength and stretching exercises using the TRX. With the tennis drills, we focus on key parts of the game that need repetition and practice, while also working on our conditioning by moving around. With the TRX, we do exercises that specifically help with tennis and core stability, as well as overall fitness.

Members who take the class report, "I really improved my ability to handle short balls due to the constant repetition and weekly practice." And on the exercise front, "the stretching has really helped get rid of the stiffness and soreness I used to have sleeping at night."

Hit and Fit is a great way to get in shape for the upcoming tennis season, and to improve your tennis, and general sense of fitness and health.

Personally, for me, the past five years of doing Hit and Fit (and Pilates) has really improved my movement, flexibility, strength. Five years ago I was getting so stiff from years of standing and teaching on the court. The workouts have helped me to feel better, extend my career and have a much more enjoyable tennis life. Practicing all that tennis hasn't hurt my game one bit either. Especially 3.5 sitters.

We offer Hit and Fit on Fridays from 10:30-12 noon, and on Saturday mornings, 7:30-9. If you want to join, just contact Keith (keith@orindawoodstennis.com) or drop in. It's a great way to get going, get in shape, and get better!

Tennis Tip:

Quick One

Ever hit a great shot, hit a ball really well, and you think to yourself, "I've got this. I'm going to take it to the next level!"

And the next ball comes, and you go for it. Only to discover that the next level, just beyond awesome, is crap.

This is one of the fundamental lessons tennis has to offer us on the court, and in life: more is not better, better is better. The law of diminishing returns is strongly featured in tennis. The logic that adding a bit more will make it even better is seriously flawed. The falloff in performance can be rapid, like a cliff.

2020 Lesson Rates

(same as 2019)

Keith & Patric

1/2 hour private \$45

1 hour private \$80

Jennifer

1/2 hour private \$40

1 hour private \$75

Non-members add \$5

Junior Clinic Pricing: see junior page

Security

I want to remind everyone to not leave valuables in your car. Not even in the trunk, or out of sight. The modern thief seems to break into any car and take a chance there is something hidden.

In response, we have installed more cameras. Cameras are only going to aid us in catching people, not in prevention (though some thieves don't want to be videoed and may think twice). We have been working with the Sheriff and Police on the issue. (Note: Orindawoods is not responsible for items in your car, so please don't leave anything there).

Weekly Lessons

Hit and Fit:

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

Friday 10:30-12 noon \$20

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

Register by e-mailing Keith

Tuesday Ladies' Clinic:

Tuesdays at 9:30 \$5

Thursday Men's Clinic:

Thursdays at 9:30 \$5

The weekly clinics are drop-in.

Quotes of the Month:

"Every blind squirrel finds a nut now and then."

"If the slot machine is paying out, keep playing it."

Doris Rawlin, Local Master Pro

This plays out in match play this way. You hit a great shot, and somehow the bum gets it back. You think (somewhat logically, but erroneously) that you need to hit a better shot because they got your great one back, so you go for more and miss. The truth is, if you hit the same shot, or even one not quite as good, they wouldn't get it back the second time very often. We need to keep playing well, and not try to play beyond our ability, or skill set. Play within yourself.

Positional Improvement:

Between Good and Great

There are a couple things that really separate the good players from the great players, or in Club speak: the 3.5s from the 4.5s / 5.0s.



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First of all, strokes do matter, and better players tend to have better strokes. This takes a lot of training, some good instruction and a willing-to-learning attitude. Part of better stroking involves better footwork, and more skilled tracking of the ball. And then there is mental toughness.

Mental Toughness is staying energized and positive, no matter what, and prepared and empowered to perform.

There are other areas where great players out perform good players, or certainly average players. Those areas are positioning and shot selection.

Shot selection is based on taking shots you can make (simple as that sounds). When under pressure, you want to get the ball back in play (easiest shot you can make under the circumstances). When conditions are more favorable, you want to play that shot that is most likely to force your opponent into an error or a weak shot you can exploit.

Sounds simple enough, but playing the appropriate shot, at the appropriate time, is a real art form. Start practicing today in the hope that someday, in a tight spot, you will make the best choices you have available to you.

Positioning is the other area where we can really see a difference between most players, and the best players. Positioning is primarily based on two ideas, 1) the most likely place your opponent can hit the ball, and 2) where they can hit it that gives you the least amount of time. If you have put them under pressure, these two shots are almost always the same. When they are comfortable (you are under pressure) they can be different shots (thus much harder to defend. Do I cover the down the middle which is the easiest and most likely, or the down the line, which gets by me the fastest). When playing defense (positioning, receiving the ball), players tend to cover what they perceive to be the most dangerous ball, but this is often a shot that isn't very likely (in other words, great players ignore dangerous, but the unlikely, lucky shots – "Every blind squirrel finds a nut now and then").

What's Possible? Where a player can place a ball is a combination of geometry, physics and physiology. A shot that may seem very possible when just considering geometry, may be next to impossible when you add in physics and physiology. For example, receiving a hard angle shot, it may look like you can go down the line, but it is very hard to hit a crooked ball straight do to force vectors (physics) and most people rotate and swing across their body (physiology).

Examples: What follows is a few situations that come up fairly often in doubles play, and where the different levels of players tend to position. If you are where the 3.0 or 3.5 stand, this is an opportunity to start realizing that perhaps the better players stand in different places, and that with a little shift in your position, you can enhance your play. Let's face it, a 3.5 player with 4.5 positioning, or 4.5 shot selection, is going to be a lot better player, even if you are not able to spend the time reworking your strokes or your mental toughness.

Fig. 1. In this first scenario, the ball is hit out wide to the receiver (R). The player is on the move, often reaching for the ball. As we have been discussing in the past few month's newsletters, is this player comfortable? If the answer is no, which is often the case, they are going to play the ball crosscourt. A 5.0 player at the net is going to move more towards the middle to intercept the return, while their partner is going to move wide to cover the angle. A less experienced

player (3.0) is going to tend to cover the alley ("follow the ball"), not realizing that while the alley looks open (geometry), if the player is moving or reaching, physics and physiology are really against a down the line shot.

Fig. 2. This is the reverse situation, the ball out wide in the add court. If the receiver (R) is right handed, it is going to be very difficult to go down the line here with a backhand. Much harder than on the deuce side (in Fig. 1) with a forehand. Again, the more experienced player (5.0), moves out to cover the middle at the net, and wide to cover the angle from the baseline. As mentioned in the notes, if the back-court player doesn't move out in either Fig 1 or Fig 2, they often suffer the "3.5 winner." A shot that looks brilliant until you realize that a big angle was not only the easiest shot for the returner, but often the only one that is possible. If the net player covers the middle, then the baseline player needs to cover the wide. Again, as in Fig 1, the less experienced player (3.0) tends to "follow the ball" and cover the alley, essentially covering a part of the court the player can't even hit into.

Fig 3. In the deuce court, a strong shot down the middle to the backhand forces a shot back up the middle. The 5.0 team is going to "stack" their formation, with the net person moving towards the middle to cut off the groundstroke, and the backcourt player drifting to the middle to defend the lob. The 5.0 will often move in, take the ball out of the air, and not allow the lob to even bounce. This keeps the serving team on the offense. The 3.0 or 3.5 backcourt player is often victimized in this situation by the lob, because they think they should "stay on their side" instead of cover the back of the court (and their partner covers the front). Up front, the 3.5 net player, by not moving to the middle, allows the easier backhand return up the center, while the 5.0 player takes that shot away (or puts it away).

Fig 4. In this situation, the ball was attempted to be played wide to the returner's backhand, but they ran around the shot and are positioned to play a forehand from a wide position. The easiest shot here is down the line, so the 5.0 recognizes the danger, and takes a step towards the alley. Notice that when a 5.0 player covers the line, they don't actually move into the alley, or even to the singles side line, but stand where they can reach a reasonable shot (the line with arrow in the picture). The 5.0 backcourt player realizes it is much easier for the receiver to play the ball up the middle, rather than wide, so they cover more of the middle.

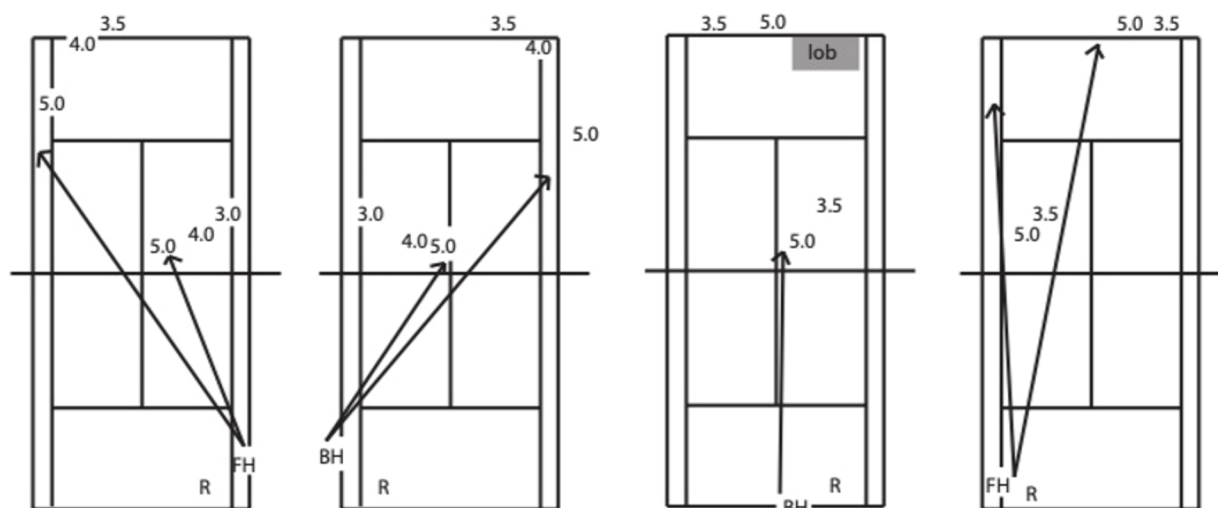


Fig. 1

Receiver (R) hits a running forehand out wide. 5.0 defends the angle, not the line. This is the "3.5 winner" situation I described a couple months ago. 3.5 is acres from the ball.

Fig. 2

Ball out wide to the backhand, 5.0 defends the angle, both at the net, and in the backcourt. Note: backcourt 5.0 trying to get a forehand! Another "3.5 winner." 3.0 should not "follow the ball".

Fig. 3

Deep ball up the middle to the backhand, 5.0 defends the middle, and the backcourt 5.0 stacks behind to play the lob. The 3.5 is killed by the lob to their backhand in this situation.

Fig. 4

Returner (R) runs around the backhand to hit a forehand. 5.0 net player covers the alley, 5.0 backcourt player covers the middle. Note: 5.0 doesn't go all the way to the sideline.

The Fix-It Formula

There is a little formula I like to use when I need to fix my stroke, often mid-match.

1. **Just do it right.** Good form, try to do your stroke with the best possible form, almost forgetting any attempt to get the ball in, or rescue the shot. Or win the point. Burning a couple of points to play better is worth it!
2. **See where it lands.** Track where the ball went, if you hit it really well. Often when we have been a bit off, our timing is off too. So, the first shot that we do really well, is often a bit off target because you are using the old timing, but it is played well yet misses. See where it goes.
3. **Adjust** within the proper form (aim higher, lower, start sooner, later, better footwork / positioning). So now, do the stroke that just "missed," but with an adjustment to get the ball over. In other words, don't change your ideal stroke, just do that stroke, don't slow down. Aim so that it would go in this time.

In other words, your form should determine where you aim. Your form should inform where you move your feet. And the timing of the stroke. Don't change your ideal stroke to get the ball in, change how you line it up, so that you can

make your ideal stroke. A better stroke should be more efficient. You move better, quicker, so of course you are going to be early on the first one, because you were gauging your timing based on earlier shots that weren't as good. Get over it! Don't be afraid of "errors" to find your way back to your best game. There are no mistakes, only lessons. Make the shot, learn the lesson, adjust to improve. You'll be a star in the second half of the match. Good luck out there!

Don't Be An Orangutan

Orangutans are extremely strong creatures, much stronger than humans. You would think that if you dressed one up in an Yankees uniform and taught them to pitch, they would dominate baseball. But the truth is, that the strongest Orangutan can only throw a ball about 40 mph. About the same speed as a 12-year-old little leaguer. Why? Orangutans are such amazing physical specimens?

Well, it seems that only one species has a shoulder that features internal and external shoulder rotators, and that is humans. An orangutan can swing their arms, and they can push or pull very strongly, but their arms are made for swinging in trees, and not rotating, or, for our purposes here, throwing. A pitcher, or a tennis player, rotates their arm to create the speed we see on a pitch, a serve, a forehand or a backhand. In other words, an indirect path of twisting and turning actually delivers a ball much faster than a direct path of swinging, pushing, pulling, or shoving.

Taking this back to the courts of Orindawoods, when you push a shot, you are playing like an Orangutan, and not like a genetically, and physiologically superior human. You are not using one of your greatest advantages in the development of the species. Shoulder rotation. It's one of the characteristics that separates humans from the beasts.

Unfortunately, to unleash your full human potential might take a bit of training. A lot of people naturally push when they attempt to throw, or toss. This is the classic "throws like a girl", though many boys do the same thing. To learn to whip your arm, to be more human, to realize your full potential, can be a bit of work.

If we look at the development of the game of tennis, we see a steady transition from pushing, to hitting, to throwing (rotating) on most of the strokes. Elite servers have been throwing for years, but in the past 30-40 years the groundstrokes have transitioned from pushing, to hitting, to throwing at the elite levels. A modern forehand has much more in common with serve today, than the swinging and hitting that was going on in the 50s and 60s. Or the pushing of club tennis. The moral of this story is simple, don't be an orangutan

Doubles Net Play: Three Options

When playing the net in doubles, and your opponent is about to hit the ball, you kind of have three options, or actions you can take. The first is the you can fake moving towards the middle, and slide back to cover the line. The second is you can move towards the middle, covering the middle of the net. The third option is that you can switch over to the other side. This is poaching, and your partner would switch sides with you, now covering the line. I guess there is a fourth option, which is to stand there and do nothing, but since one of the main ways that you win points is that you force your opponent into errors, it is better to be moving around, causing a distraction, even if you are just faking.

Spring Junior Program 2020

The 2020 Winter Junior Clinics began the week of **April 6th**, and will continue thru the week of **May 25th**. No classes the week of March 30th. The 8 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>
I	<u>Lil' Ones</u>	Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm	\$117*	\$180*
	<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	\$210*	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	\$2105*	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	\$265*	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: add \$25 (\$15 for Lil' Ones). **Inclement Weather:** check orindawoodstennis.com "Live Tennis Cam".