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Orindawoods Tennis News

Orindawoods Tennis Club: 925-254-1065; Office Hours: M-F 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat./Sun.: 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., www.orindawoodstennis.com

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

July Twilight Tennis

The next Twilight Tennis BBQ is Friday evening, July 27. We will play tennis from 5-7 p.m., and then have a BBQ on the Club deck, featuring Kinder's steaks and chickens. The cost is \$15 if you just have dinner, and \$17 if you join us for tennis too. Keith will mix and match the players to produce the most fun possible.

You can register on the website, just click on the event in the Club's calendar. You can also e-mail Keith, or call the Pro Shop to sign up.

Pool Hours and Rules

The pool is open from dawn to dusk. The guest fee is \$3.

We like everyone to be out by dusk, so the pool can be freely used by all the teenagers who hop the fence in the middle of the night. For those of you that missed this great story a few years back, we had to replace the pool fence. We wanted to prevent unauthorized people from jumping the fence at night. That was our first goal. Then we checked with the Fire Department, and found out that we have to have a fence low enough so that people can get out in case of an emergency. So we got a fence that is tall enough to keep people on the outside out, but short enough for people on the inside to escape.

Please remember:

1. There is no lifeguard, so swimming is at your own risk.
2. Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult, no matter how well they swim.
3. It is never a good idea to swim alone
4. There is no running in the pool area.
5. There is no glass allowed in the pool area
6. No diving
7. Remember that it is not safe for little kids to be in the hot tub, as they can't regulate their internal body temperature, so kids under 5 should not be in the hot tub.

Tennis Tip

Partner Politics

Ah yes, now we come to the topic of "partner politics." Few things can effect how great (or lousy) a day you have on the tennis courts more than how you get along with your partner. Believe me, in my line of work, I have heard plenty of stories about how "this partner" or "that partner" is either a dream to play with, or a nightmare. (Stories are running about 10 to 1 in favor of the nightmare, by the way. People don't come to me when they are happy too often -- how sad).

Perhaps we should begin with this: we play tennis for fun. There are people in the world that play tennis for their job, but none of them are playing at Orindawoods, so "chill baby."

Keep Orindawoods Blue

OK, summer is here and that means that we have some people playing that don't always play during the rest of the year. This is an important time to remember that there are no black soled shoes allowed on the beautifully blue Orindawoods tennis courts. Shoes that mark (usually running shoes), leave a black streak that can not be removed.

Believe me, the last person I caught did their very best with a tooth brush, crawling on their knees, bound in shackles and chains, but they were not able to remove the offensive marks.

The frustrating thing about this problem is that if 999 out of 1000 people have the right shoes, you still have a court with black marks for everyone. It is the height of selfishness to play in improper shoes.

Of course, we just spent a great deal of money to recolor courts 1-3, and let's keep them (and the other courts) looking nice for everyone to enjoy.

As a side note to you offenders who only think about yourself, running shoes are not safe to play tennis in, and you can roll your ankle very easily, as they have no lateral support. Is this karma at work keeping the courts blue?

So Keep Orindawoods Blue, and we will all be happy!

Heavy Court Usage

We have some busy days on the court coming up. Here are the big ones.

1. Ace It! Is June 23 and will take all the courts at the Club from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
2. Monday Night Team Tennis takes all the Club's courts starting at 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., for the rest of the evening. Mondays, 6/18-8/20
3. Matches: There are a few more USTA League matches, check the court calendar to see when these will be played. Most matches are on the weekends, starting after 11 a.m. to avoid prime time.

Every single player you play with will have some flaw. If they didn't have any flaws, they wouldn't be playing with you, they would be playing with Roger Federer, Rafal Nadal or Justine Henin. And even these fine folks mess up from time to time. Again, we're just playing for fun here (can't say this enough to yourself, by the way, especially when you are about to lose it). It is easy to focus on what your partner doesn't do so well, but remember, a partner that doesn't serve so well, has some other quality that lets them compete at this level, perhaps their volleys are great.

So while some players are dreamy to play with, and others are scary, the truth is, it is really all up to you. There is no partner that is too horrible, or too great, that you can't either overcome, or mess up with. Yes, you hold the key.

What if your partner doesn't play the same strategy, or style, or compliment your game. This is a tough one, and often a source of frustration. Maybe they cover the alley, when you have taken 2,000 lessons that have shown you the way to win is control the center. If she just covered the center, you know you could take these bums, but she is out there in the alley, watching the match. What to do?

I usually make a "we" statement here, and say something like "we need to cover the middle better." If this doesn't work, then it is time to adjust, and I mean, you have to adjust (as repugnant as that may feel). You are not going to teach them how to play in the middle of a match.

Another example. Maybe playing Australian formation is the key to victory, but if your partner has never done it before, better to stick with what they are familiar with, even if you are losing. Your best chance, is that you both play better together (even with his flawed style), or the other team plays worse. Trying to figure out how to play in the middle of a match never works.

So what about the scary partner. "I would have played much better, but that [your favorite word here] was always coaching me, and telling me what to do, and where to stand, how to hit my backhand, when to lob, where to serve, and why I was a loser. I tried to ignore them, but I just played like crap. I couldn't play my own game."

Sound familiar? Been there, done that. Too often. I really think there are two ways to deal with this kind of partner. No, I don't mean, decline to play with them. Tennis is fun, even with "those" people. Try one of these strategies:

1) One thing to realize is, a lot of times, these are good players (or at least players who understand the strategy and tactics of tennis – this is not bad news, you want a strong partner). It is because they are strong players, unfortunately, that they think they know it all, and want to help you to know it all too (in the next 3 points, if not yesterday). Rather than complain about this player (behind their back), look them straight in the eye and say, "I play like s--- when you talk to me." Few people can pull this off, this kind of honesty, and that is why there is a problem. If we could all be honest, and show up, the world would be a better place.

Often what these people are saying are saying is right, or makes sense, and tell them that (flattery always works with people who are "great"), but remind them, in the immortal words of one of my students, that "thinking makes me stupid." It is good to add, "Like most players, I play best unconsciously, if I think too much, I get worse. I need to do what you are suggesting in practice first."

Most players like to win (hey, everybody likes to win), and if they realize that their coaching is hurting their chances, they will shut up. If they don't, they talk because they have some unmet need, which is just too strong. Which leads to option #2:

2) Don't listen. Don Miguel Ruiz wrote in the Four Agreements, "Whatever people do, feel, think or say, don't take it personally. Others are going to have their own opinion according to their belief system, so whatever they think about you is not about you, but it is about them."

It is really about their issues, needs and strategies. They are talking to fulfill some need that they have. This could be the need to control, to be the boss, or they are nervous about the outcome (usually the case), etc... Anyway, since it isn't about you, really, there is no reason to pay attention to them.

One of my mentors taught me the following trick: Pick just a few people that you accept coaching from (perhaps the person you are paying to teach you, this is a good place to start), as for everyone else, including your partner, just smile and nod when they tell you stuff, and don't listen to a thing. It takes some practice, but you can perfect this skill. Chances are you are already an expert with your spouse (except perhaps on the tennis court, a personal growth opportunity if there ever was one).

I had one student recently tell me that she went to a team practice and this well-meaning observer was telling her

to do the exact opposite of what I had been teaching her to do in her lessons. This is a touchy social situation to be in, as we don't want to tell the "well-intentioned" coach to "take a flying leap" but we also have no intention of doing what they are saying. Smiling and nodding works for me. They may even say, "you're following through much better," even though you are doing

Quote of the Month:

"Thinking makes me stupid"

-- a perceptive student

the same thing you have always done. Smiling and nodding, they just want to feel heard and important.

By the way, if you are ever talking to me down at the Club, about how to run the place and I am smiling and nodding, please forget I ever told you this.

So when do we talk to our partners, and what is it that we say? There is the famous scene from the baseball movie *Bull Durham* where there is a conference on the mound, and all the players look very agitated. The pitching coach comes out from the dugout, and asks what the problem is. The catcher reports that they are having a hard time deciding what to buy for one of the players' upcoming wedding. The pitching coach makes a few suggestions about nice gifts, checking where they are registered, and the meeting breaks up and the game goes on.

Of course this is a parody of these "secret" meetings that the fans really want to be in on. Fans figure this is where the real brilliance is in sports. But the truth is, you can't teach someone how to play in the middle of the game. And strategy changes don't really work either, unless the player has practiced them in advance. There is an old adage in coaching, that nothing should happen on game day, that you haven't dealt with in practice. For example, you might see that the opponents are getting too close to the net, and suggest that "we" lob, but if your partner hasn't ever hit a lob in her life, this strategy probably isn't going to work, even though in the perfect world, it is proper correction.

Of course there is always option #3 in dire circumstances (i.e. last resort).

3) Remind your talkative partner that they have to stand in front you with their back turned when you have to hit your powerful serve. Sometime you have been known "to be terribly wild" when agitated from too much thinking. Plunk them one or two times, they already think you are lousy, so you have nothing to lose. That should do it.

So, what can you say to your partner that will have a positive effect? After all, communication is important. I always figure that my primary job as a partner is to stay positive, be supportive, and try not to get in the way of my partner playing as well as she can. This is immensely difficult to do. Especially the "getting out of the way of my partner playing her best." If, like me, you love a challenge, try doing this playing mixed doubles with your spouse. Saints fail at this, let alone mere mortals. And if there is a little devil in you, oye vey.

But there are times when a strategic change of direction can help. If I feel a strategy change is called for, I usually wait until the end of a set, and even then, I consider if it is really realistic before I suggest it. This isn't a time for wish lists. When I coach players in a match situation, I try to boil it down to one or two things they can look at. I remember telling a team of very good volleyers once that I didn't care if they won or lost the match, as long as they did it at the net. They had become tentative, and were staying back too much, where their best chance was up at the net. They went back to moving forward, they won. A very happy story.

When I watch the pros, here is what I think the major strategy change is that most players attempt to make (ready for this, drum roll...): play better. That's right, you don't see a baseliner suddenly serving and volleying. They figured out about one hundred million tennis balls ago that their best chance was to hit ground strokes from the baseline. If they are losing, their focus is on doing what they do best, better. That simple. After losing, a top player will often say, "I just wasn't making my shots today." I've heard Serena say this often. It sounds arrogant when she doesn't give her opponent credit for beating her, but the truth is, in terms of she can control, she is right.

Repetition. So let me say it once again, stay positive with your partner. Get out of the way of their success. If they are playing poorly, or not up to your standards, keep your mouth shut, and no negative body language (and you thought keeping your mouth shut was tough). Play your own game, and expect your partner to play great, because they could start playing great at any moment, and you don't want to miss out on being ready to charge to victory because you were still distracted by the way they played the last point, or set, or match. "The past is a cancelled check, the future, just a promissory note. Only the present is cash in hand." Stay there, stay playing your best. Good luck out there!

The Two Finds

Playing tennis really comes down to finding two things. (I don't mean a trophy and a post-match beer). You have to find the ball, then find the target. As I mentioned last month, finding the ball requires coordination. We, as humans, are most coordinated when we are loose. Be very relaxed, especially when we are finding the ball, and waiting for it to come to us. Notice how the pros are always dancing in place, shaking their arms out between points.

Once we have the ball lined up, we need to switch our focus from contact (coordination) to the second find, that is, finding the court with our shot. This requires slowing the racquet down, and firming or steadying it up, so that it faces the target. As we noted last month, these two skills are almost opposite, but of the two, this second one is harder. I think we are naturally trained to find the ball. No one, including the youngest student, wants to miss the ball. Virtually everyone who plays tennis will abandon aiming, if they feel like they have to coordinate hitting the ball. This is why players seldom miss the ball completely, but often miss the court.

On the other hand, if there is an over emphasis on finding the court, players will be too stiff in an attempt to



Orindawoods Tennis Club

650 Orindawoods Dr
Orinda, CA 94563
USA

Phone:

925-254-1065

Fax:

925-254-1380

Website:

www.orindawoodstennis.com

Executive Tennis

Director:

Keith Wheeler
[orindawoodstc@
sbccglobal.net](mailto:orindawoodstc@sbccglobal.net)

Head Pro:

Patric Hermanson
PatricTennis@yahoo.com

Associate Pro:

Philip Laubscher

Junior Tennis Staff:

Wing Fai Doud
Chris Michaels
Sarah Smith
Emily Jorgens

Weekend Staff:

Cortney Krakow

Newsletter Editor:

Keith Wheeler

Associate Editors:

Kristie Wheeler
Patric Hermanson

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avoid variance. When a player is stiff and uncoordinated, this is generally the reason. We all know players, including ourselves from time to time, that are so concerned with getting it in, that their coordination and power suffer.

To summarize, start loose and focus on aligning to the ball, finding the ball. Once this looks like it is accomplished, change your focus to aiming the racquet, steadying up the racquet, stopping the racquet head from swinging, or, in other words, finding the court. Good luck, and good focus.

The Big Assumption Teacher

Did you ever hear the saying, "To assume makes an ass out of u and me?" Yet we assume all day long on the tennis court. We assume the ball is going to behave in a certain way. How do we stop doing this, how do we look at each ball as a new object, moving in a new way, and not one that similar to every one that we have seen before?

In actual fact, no two balls hit to us have ever been exactly the same Our mind is able to group events that are similar into one group. In most of life, if we didn't do this, there would be so much variety that we would go crazy. Yet every ball that comes to us is different. We need to have some similarities with how we deal with each ball (our stroke), but we must also adjust to the slight nuances that are different in the flight path, angle, spin, bounce and weight of the ball.

Whether you knew it or not, we have the perfect tool at Orindawoods to help you stop assuming where the ball is coming, and deal with the real world. This tool is called "The Wind". Yes, the wind is your friend, because if you assume where the ball is going in the wind, you will end up looking like an ass. This is not good.

So next time it is blowing like a hurricane up here at Windy Woods, smile, and say, "Thank you Mr. Wind for making me have better focus."

Happiness achieved. Another blissful tennis moment in the wind. Nirvana.

Summer Junior Tennis

The summer junior program started on June 11th and runs eight weeks (through August 2nd). We will feature six weeks of our tennis camps, plus two weeks of our fun-filled Wet and Wild camps, (tennis plus some recreational swimming to cool off). We'll take the month of August off, as most people are traveling at this time (private lessons and clinics will be available at that time).

Numerous children have enjoyed a fun summer on the courts with Patric, Philip and the gang, and have greatly improved their games at the same time. The local high school teams feature several of our graduates.

Below is listed the clinics and camps for the summer. To get more information, see page four, please call Patric at the Club (254-1065), check our website's junior page or write Patric at patricTennis@yahoo.com.

Summer Junior Tennis at Orindawoods

<i>Week 1</i>	<i>June 11-14</i>	<i>Tennis Camp</i>
<i>Week 2</i>	<i>June 18-21</i>	<i>Tennis Camp</i>
<i>Week 3</i>	<i>June 25-28</i>	<i>Wet and Wild Camp</i>
<i>Week 4</i>	<i>July 2-5 (no class on 7/4)</i>	<i>Tennis Camp</i>
<i>Week 5</i>	<i>July 9-12</i>	<i>Tennis Camp</i>
<i>Week 6</i>	<i>July 16-21</i>	<i>Wet and Wild Camp</i>
<i>Week 7</i>	<i>July 23-26</i>	<i>Tennis Camp</i>
<i>Week 8</i>	<i>July 30-Aug. 2</i>	<i>Tennis Camp</i>

Tennis Camp Weeks' Schedule:

<i>Lil' Ones</i>	<i>Ages 4-6</i>	<i>Tues & Thurs</i>	<i>11:15-12noon</i>	<i>\$30/\$35 non OW</i>
<i>Tennis Clubbers</i>	<i>Ages 7-10</i>	<i>Mon-Thurs</i>	<i>12noon-1:30p</i>	<i>\$90/\$100 nonOW</i>
<i>Big Boomers</i>	<i>Ages 11+</i>	<i>Mon-Thurs</i>	<i>1:30-3:30p</i>	<i>\$115/\$130 non</i>

Wet and Wild Weeks' Schedule:

<i>Tennis Clubbers</i>	<i>Ages 7-10</i>	<i>Mon-Thurs</i>	<i>12noon-3 pm</i>	<i>\$165/\$180 non OW</i>
<i>Big Boomers</i>	<i>Ages 11+</i>	<i>Mon-Thurs</i>	<i>1:00-4 pm</i>	<i>\$165/\$180 non OW</i>

Contact Patric for more information: 254-1065 or patricTennis@yahoo.com

We look forward to seeing you this summer!