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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

Ace It! Save The Date

Ace It!, our amazing Breast Cancer Awareness Day is going to be on Saturday, June 21 this year. Mark the date in your calendar. Registration will begin in April and we hope to see you all there. Once again, we will have our "tour of pros" clinic in the morning, a great lunch, and our Ace It! Tournament in the afternoon. Donations go to the Carol Ann Reed Breast Center at Alta Bates.

Monday Night Team Tennis

MTT will start in mid-June again this year. We will have a registration period for members, and then open it up to the public if we still need more players. Again, we will aim at having the optimum number of players, so play and fun is maximized, while still having enough to field teams through the dog-days of summer. Registration will take place in May.

League Make-up Dates

Rain And All That

Well, it certainly rained a lot in January, and early February, and that has put us way behind on our weekday league match schedule. The result of that is that there will be lots of league matches on upcoming Mondays and Fridays. League matches take 3 courts, so there are always 4 other courts to play on. One is often used for lessons, and the other 3 can be reserved. So, if you want to play on a Monday or a Friday, it would be a good idea to make a reservation. So heads up!

USTA season starts in March. We have four ladies league teams participating in the upcoming adult season. These matches are played on the weekends, after 11 a.m..

USTA Adult League

We have four teams registered for USTA Adult league. We have women's 3.0, 3.5A, 3.5B and 4.0 level teams. Thank you to the captains who stepped up to the plate and led the effort. For our established 4.0 and 3.5 teams, this was not that hard, but our 3.0 captains Leslie, Sandy and Merideth had to work hard to come up with a roster. It was a last second effort by Jane Blag and Virginia Samuelson to come up with a 3.5 B team. Well done ladies.

Matches will begin the week of March 17, and are played on the weekends here at Orindawoods. We limit matches to starting after 11 a.m., and only to three courts. The format of the Adult Season is 2 singles and 3 doubles, so eight people get to play each match. Good luck to all our players!

Indian Wells

It's March, and that means it is time for the Pacific Life Open tournament down in Indian Wells. This year, we have 30 people going in the club sponsored group, plus all the other Indian Wells lovers already there. With almost every top pro committed to playing this year with the exception of Henin and the Williams sisters (still allergic to Palm Springs), it

Ball Machine Club

It is time once again for interested players to register for the Ball Machine Club for the year. The cost is still \$100 (unlimited use), and the membership goes from March 1, 2008 to March 1, 2009. If you have further questions, give Keith or Patric a call. Make checks payable to "Orindawoods." Thank you.

Reservation System

Frequently Asked Questions

When I drop in, do I have to sign in on the computer?

If you are going to play on courts 4 & 5, the drop-in courts, then no, you just sign in on the green board outside. If you are going on one of the courts that can be reserved, however, you should reserve it yourself on the lobby computer to make sure you don't get bumped. What is listed on the website has priority over the green board.

How do I check what court I reserved? When you get to the club, look on the lobby computer to see which court you have. If it is later in the day, you can scroll down by moving the wheel on the top of the mouse. The screen updates every 30 seconds.

If the lobby computer's screen is blank, what do I do?

If the screen is dark, the screen saver is probably on. Just touch any key, or move the mouse and the screen saver will stop. If the screen is white, then there is a different problem. Move the mouse cursor on the screen up to the upper right hand corner and click on the red "X". This closes the window. On the desktop, double click on the icon that says, "Tennis Lobby View." This will get you back to the schedule for the day.

How do I make a reservation on the lobby computer?

You click on the "click here" on the right side of the screen, and that opens up a window where you can sign in to your account. Enter your user name, and password, and then go to the court scheduler and make a reservation. There are instructions there, if you don't remember, or this is your first time reserving on line. You can reserve up to 7 days and one hour in advance.

Do same day reservations count as one of my two advanced reservations? Yes.

How do I sign up for the ball machine? You reserve court # 3, and then you make a second reservation for the ball machine.

Does this count as two reservations? Unfortunately, yes. Even computers have limitations. Ya don't say?

should be a great tournament. Most of our group arrives on Friday, March 14 and returns on either Sunday or Monday. A couple of crazy people stay a few more days (like me).

While the focus is mostly on watching tennis, there are always courts to play on, and great food to eat. And El Paseo is one of the great shopping places on earth, if that is your favorite sport. If you didn't sign up to join us this year, give it a thought next year. We usually purchase tickets in September.

Keith and Patric at the NorCal USPTA Convention

Executive Tennis Director Keith Wheeler and Head Pro Patric Hermanson spent the weekend of February 8-10 at the United States Professional Tennis Association's Northern California Convention learning the latest in tennis teaching and club management from some of the best teachers in the game.

There were talks by top junior and pro coaches Robert Lansdorp, Mark Bey, and Tom McCraw; as well as college coach and scientist, Doug Eng, club owner/manager, Rod Heckelman and an expert from the USTA in under ten year old tennis, Anne Pankhurst.

Highlights

Robert Lansdorp

Of course Lansdorp, who broke on the scene as Tracy Austen's coach, and went on to teach Lindsay Davenport, Pete Sampras and Maria Sharapova was the big draw. Four world #1s isn't a bad resume. How someone who coached Tracy Austen, the great moonballer, the master of fluff tennis and the forty shot blooper rally, became the major proponent of power tennis, was an interesting story in itself.

It is a classic tale of how a good coach changes with the times, and the talent they are working with. It is a good model for us all, whether we are players or teachers. Survival of the fittest means keeping up with the latest and greatest. Or as a wise sage once said, "When you are done learning, you're done."

Lansdorp really emphasized power, and he wanted his students to take a full swing. His crusty style ("come on pusher, hit the ball"), and harsh motivational skills ("you hit like a little girl" – said to both boys and girls equally) would not be for everyone, but it was good entertainment, and you can't argue with the results.

It is very easy in a sport like tennis, where control is premium, to become over cautious, and sell your self short. I think this is why Lansdorp has been so successful, because he gets players to go for it, when all the pressure on results, and not making errors, rankings and winning, tend to make players too careful. He is the ultimate "safe ain't safe" coach. Lansdorp aims for the top, while other coaches teach a style that may make the average player do reasonably well (be consistent, aim high over the net, get a lot of balls in), but seldom takes people to #1.

He felt timing was key, and had many drills and skills that worked on developing your timing. He brought a ten-year old girl with him who hit better than just about anyone on in this Club, and certainly better than the two ranked NorCal Juniors (age 14) he also worked with. She had a one-handed backhand, proving that stroke is not about strength or ball height (this girl was small), but skill. She ripped it, winners all over the place.

Last month's Australian Open Women's Final was certainly a good example of this power style of play, with both Sharapova and Ivanovic going for big shots virtually all the time, and when not hitting winners, were hitting in balls that were very hard for the opponent to return. If they ever just got a ball in, the other would blast it for a winner. While this strategy seems risky, Mary Carillo pointed out it is actually higher risk to play a "safe" shot, and have it crushed more often than not (it's still percentages, folks). Playing this style all the time might not play out very well on the courts of Orindawoods, or in the young junior ranks, but if you can hit it hard, and in enough, it will take you to the top. Lansdorp understands this, I believe, and he aims very high for his students.

For the "Average Joe or Josephine", I think the lesson to remember is that your opponent's consistency is partially a function of the shot you give them, not just of their skill. So without getting too wild and just missing all over the place, if you can hit more forcing shots (not always pace, spin and placement too), you will force more errors. This is also the way to protect yourself from the major irritants you find on the court. If you hit a strong enough shot, it isn't that easy to lob well, for example. Or drop shot, or hit angles.

Six Stages of a Match

Mark Bey, a very successful junior coach from the Midwest, and who has also worked with top-twenty pros, gave a great talk on the six stages of a match.

- 1) Warm-up and first 3 games
- 2) Up or down a break
- 3) First to 5 games and the completion of the 1st set
- 4) 1st game of the second set
- 5) "Driver's seat" (ahead a set, and multiple games or breaks)
- 6) "Closing it out" match games, and match tie-breakers

Quote of the Month:

"Gambling is not a vice, it is an expression of our humanness. We gamble. Some do it at the gambling table, some do not. You play, you win, you play, you lose. You play."

-- Jeanette Winterson

Any other situations that came up would be similar to one of those six. He offered both an analysis of the problem encountered in each stage, and suggestions for focus and solutions. He had some great drills for working on the mental and physical skills needed to work through the stages. After all, tennis differs from most sports in that you have to win the match, not just get ahead and run out the clock.

Bey also pointed out just how much the game has changed with the advent of the match tie-breaker. The minimum number of points you need to win to capture a two out of three sets regular scoring match would be 48 (win 12 games without a deuce, win no other points or games). With a match tie-breaker, that total drops to 34 (24 points to win one set, 10 to win the tie-breaker). So you can be terrible in the first set, squeak by in the second set, perhaps with a couple lucky shots, catch them a bit when they are a bit emotionally down in the tie-break, get ahead a couple of points in the tie-breaker, and serve it out. It means the average number of points you need to win is probably in the mid to high forties, rather than the mid to high sixties. Focus and intense bursts of effort are even more important in the new match tie-break world. Hot streaks are big. Stamina and fitness are played down.

10 and Under Tennis

Anne Packhurst gave a great presentation on teaching kids under age ten. She placed great emphasis on the non-tennis physical skills that kids need to develop, mostly between 5-10 years old, and how poorly many kids actually run, throw and balance, pointing out that we need to do a better job in these basic areas as coaches before even letting them touch a racquet if we really are doing our job. Scary, but if not learned in this 5-10 year-old window, a kid rarely reaches their potential. It is that important to get our kids off the video games, and out exercising.

She did make a key point on the nature of tennis, that we all need to remember. She said that children have a very hard time understanding the concept of two out of three. This is a key feature to tennis, and one of the things that makes it unique from most other sports. You can lose badly in one set, and still win, the score is not cumulative, and it is not based on an amount of time played. As adults, we need to remember these things too.

Another interesting developmental difference between adults and children is that children believe that success is based totally on effort. About 13 or 14, they start to realize that ability is also involved. This is why a lot of juniors drop out of their childhood sports about this time. With adults, ability is on the table from day one, so players are divided into different levels, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, so that each person feels they have a chance based on effort, because the ability is fairly even. One could argue this is a cop out, but who likes getting pounded by a superior athlete.

Club Management

Rod Heckleman, an owner of Mt. Tam Racquet and Fitness Club gave an interesting talk on why tennis pros become good club managers. Coming from the game of tennis, where honesty is key (call your own lines), pros tend to tell it as it is. Managers who come from a marketing, or sales background, tend to exaggerate, or pitch only one side of the story. As one manager once told me, "They blow powdered sugar up your nose." People from an accounting background are accurate, but often not as positive or trying to move the membership forward, to educate. This honesty flips over to the other side, as managers from a tennis background tend to trust the members more too, which makes for a much more positive, fun environment to come and play. Few enjoy being policed, or not trusted. A manager from a tennis background will also tell the members what they need to hear (make the tough, close call), instead of what they want to hear. Not always the same thing, to be sure.

Heckleman pointed out that pros are teachers, and therefore they are always looking to be positive, and educate the membership. While some managers tell people what to do, a manager from a teaching background tell them why they need to do it, and why it is in their best interest to do so. He gave the example of two signs in a spin class room, first by an authoritarian, second by a former pro:

"Put the bikes away when you are done – Management"

"Please put the bikes away so that the seats aren't damaged and they will be nice for you next time you spin."

Obviously, for the tennis members, managers that come from a tennis background understand the concerns of players. A net that isn't the right height is much more likely to get a former player's attention (and he'll know how to fix it), than an accountant or a marketing person. Finally, tennis players are the kind of people that are always looking to improve. They take classes, work on their craft, read books, and go to conventions, they are never content to stay the same. This makes for a vibrant, alive club, that is always growing. This is what our manager, Keith, and our assistant manager, Patric, bring to the table for you.

Weakest Dink

Keith got selected as one of eight NorCal pros to compete in a Survivor-type "reality" game called The Weakest Dink. The eight players had to hit 5 running forehands each, trying to hit a target area of the court. The player (s)



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who had the most in the target area got immunity, while one of the other players would be voted out of the competition. Keith wasn't brilliant, didn't get immunity, but also didn't draw attention to himself and survived the vote. The next round, with seven players remaining, was running backhands. Again Keith survived the poll of death, now they were down to six. Different target areas, more running shots, Keith still not voted out. One woman, a great pro from Pacific Athletic Club named Claire, was getting immunity every round. She was clearly the player to beat. When we got down to three players, she missed her first couple targets, probably by about an inch, and Keith had his best round, to grab immunity. Claire was voted off, and Keith was in the finals. The finals, consisted of drop shots from the baseline. At this point, Keith would like to thank Anya Kaiser, for all the drop shot practice she gives him. Keith easily won the battle of the drop shot, and became "The Weakest Dink" for NorCal.

The title might not be so flattering, but two free box seat tickets to the Pacific Life Open eases the pain. Actually, it was a great game for playing under pressure, and using strategy. I think often, the best player or team can be beaten, if you have the right strategy, and employ the best tactics. And have a bit of luck.

Good luck to all you dinks out there!

Orindawoods Tennis Club Fees for 2008

Club Fees

Initiation Fee:	\$0
Reinstatement Fee:	\$300
Monthly Dues	\$91
Junior Associate Dues	\$46
Pool Membership:	\$275

Guest Fees

Prime time	\$5
Non-prime time	\$5
Team Guest Fee	\$40

Pool Guest Fees

Family	\$5
Individual	\$3

Lesson Fees

Member Drop-in Clinics	\$5
Keith & Patric's Member Lesson Rates	
1/2 hour	\$30
1 hour	\$55
Non-members	add \$5

Group hour \$60

Philip's Member Lesson Rates

1/2 hour	\$22
1 hour	\$45
non-members	add \$5

Group hour \$50

Ball Machine Club \$100/yr

Orindawoods Junior Winter/Spring Clinic Schedule 2008

The 2008 Winter Junior Clinics began the week of **January 8th**, and will continue until March 17. The Spring session will follow with the same class schedule.

Program leader for the 10 week session is Head Pro **Patric Hermanson**.

Class	Times	1 day/wk	2 days/wk
Lil' Ones (age 4-6)	Tu-Th 3:15-4	\$100/\$115	\$175/\$190
Future Stars (7-10)	Tuesday 4-5:30 pm	\$200/\$225	n/a
Tennis Development	Thursday 4-5:30 pm	\$200/\$225	n/a
Tournament Training (invite only)	Friday 4:30-6 pm	\$200/\$225	n/a

The member price is the first price listed, while non-members pay the second amount. Prices will be pro-rated for a later start, so you can still join the action.

We have factored into the cost of the clinics the potential of two weeks of missed classes due to rain, illness, vacations, etc. Due to rain, Winter has been extended.

Special Discount: 10% discount off the cost of second sibling. Discount taken off the lower of the two costs.

Inclement Weather: In case of questionable weather (rain), please call the Pro Shop for a court condition update. We also post cancellations on the OW website.

For more information or to sign up, please call Keith or Patric at the Pro Shop **(925) 254-1065**, or e-mail Patric at patricTennis@yahoo.com. Tennis shoes required (no black soled shoes).