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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

Monday Team Tennis

Monday Team Tennis has been fantastic this summer, with the three top teams in a close race all season long. Sandy Leon's Grateful Heads have lead almost every week, but both Susie Richardson's Prince Hybrid and Barbara Britto-Tang's Wilson Hammers have been right on their heels. With three weeks to go, the Grateful Heads started to pull away, and now with one week to go in the season, the standings are:

Team	Wins	Losses	PCT	AVE (104)
Sandy	469	363	.564	58.63
Barbara	394	334	.541	56.29
Susie	388	340	.533	55.43
Kim	329	399	.452	47.00
Danielle	292	436	.401	41.71

Thanks to all who played this year, and for all the hard work put in by all the captains, and those who have contributed to the wonderful meals each week. It is a great party, with our favorite game as the format. We look forward to you joining us again next year!

Tennis Tip

Playing a Match

OK, the practice is over, the new strokes dialed in, now it is time to play the Big Match. For the sake of this article, I am assuming that this is a match that you really want to play well in ("You mean, win?"). For some of you, this might be every time that you step on a court, for others, only the big game. And others, there are no big games, just fun games and you can use this newsletter to line the liter box. Actually, even if you are the most casual recreational player, I don't know anyone who doesn't want to play well when they go out on the court. I've never heard someone say, "I think I'll play like poop today." (back to the liter box).

Having said all that, what follows are some ideas on how to prepare for game day, and some thoughts to think as you play the game. There are even some useful reflections after play is done. There are four basic levels on which competitive sports take place. They are the mental, the emotional, the physical and the spiritual levels.

Spiritual? Well, yes. These are the reasons why you play. For example, if you are playing only for the glory of winning, and that losing is a disgrace, I pretty much guarantee you are going to have some real pressure issues (choking, tanking, outbursts of anger, etc...) at some point. The outcome matters too much, and you are setting yourself up for an intense dose of pressure. For example, a team of ringers, assembled for glory, is going to have a lot more trouble with pressure than a bunch of good players who get together to play just because they love playing with each other. The ringer team could be a lot stronger, but may not win a match

From the Manager's Desk

Repairs and the Costs of Keeping the Club Nice.

I have spent the last month doing the budget for 2008, and for reviewing the Reserve Study with Board Member Mark Kaiser. As you know, the Club is in great shape, with lots of people to play with, and a very nice facility. To keep it that way, we have to plan for the future, and we can see that there are some big expenses coming up in the near future (courts 4-7 get a new color layer next year, the pool needs to be resurfaced soon, as well as replacing the pool's retaining wall. It is time for new gazebos, and the deck furniture is in need of being replaced soon. A new drinking fountain needs to be purchased soon too). The good news is that each year, we put aside money for these projects. This is where Orindawoods is different than most clubs, because it is owned by a homeowner's association, and is run like one. So each year, money goes into a reserve fund to fix and replace worn out "parts." Most clubs spend all their money on operating or profits, but not Orindawoods, we are required by law to reserve. So there is money to replace things (not for new things, however). Still, none of these things are cheap, and so it takes a lot of work to budget things properly. We are committed to keeping the Club in top shape, so that your tennis and pool fun can go on uninterrupted. Please feel free to bring to my attention anything that you think needs work. It may not get fixed right away, but it will go on the priority list.

District Playoffs

Our Ladies 3.5 Team played in the District Playoffs in Napa on August 10-12. The team had a great time, winning the opening match 4-1, only to fall on days 2 and 3 of the competition. Overall, we won 7 matches, and lost 8, putting us in the thick of the competition. There were some close tie-breakers that didn't go our way. We win those, we are close to the top. Great job ladies! Thank you to captain Susie Richardson, and our exciting District's roster of Mary O'Neil, Gina Tracey, Cori Bertucio, Lu DeSilva, Ellie Kann, Andrea O'Brien, Liz Jennings and Pauline Holst. Also thanks to all the other players who played during the season, and all those who went up and watched the big weekend. It was a lot of fun, and these ladies did Orindawoods' proud, giving each opponent a run for their money.

between these two types of teams because of the pressure. Perceived pressure is huge in tennis.

Also in the spiritual realm would be your sense of fair play, or perhaps for others, "only losers don't cheat". Another might be, "I only play because my daddy makes me." Or, perhaps, "I just love this game, I can't play enough." In other words, the spiritual realm involves your values, what feeds your fire, what makes you tick. You might not think about these things all the time, especially if you have been playing for a long time, but believe me, they are the base of the building, the cornerstone of your athletic career, and if there are problems here, they need some work or you will never reach your potential. On the other hand, you probably won't work on them on game day. These are habits of thought, developed over time, and hopefully put in place well before "The Big One."

Physical. Everyone knows that a good warm-up is important (no, I don't mean your outfit – however, there is perhaps some merit to "look sharp, feel sharp, play sharp"). If you can get out and hit some before you play, it is a good idea. I like to spend about 20 minutes hitting ideally. Hit every shot you might use, some ground strokes, volleys, serves, returns, over heads, etc...Mainly, you just want to get a sense of heat in the body (warmed up, the words in these terms do make some sense some times) and the feeling of rhythm in your shots, or feeling in the groove. The warm up is not, however, practice. In fact, in one sense, I don't care if I hit a single ball in. You are not learning how to play, or even if your shots are "on." Just get loose. You don't keep score in warm-ups, or as we used to say on the volleyball tour, "it doesn't matter who wins warm-ups." One last thing about warming up. The five minute warm-up you get with your opponent before the match begins is not enough if you really want to play well. Some players are terrible at warming up their opponent, don't count on your opponent being one of the good ones. Finally, when you do get to the 5-minute warm up before the match, do what the pros do, and spend about half the time hitting serves. It's the most important shot. Start slow, focus on rhythm first, then accuracy and then, perhaps speed. It is best yet; to let whatever speed you have just happen.

If you can't get on a court to warm up, jog in place to warm the body, then do some shadow swings and footwork to get in the groove. Nadal looks like a boxer before a match, doing that dance. Why not you?

Mental / Emotional. The mental and emotional are closely related, but are two separate areas of concern and action. Emotionally, you want high positive energy flowing through your veins. The mental, or habits of thought, are how you get to the most beneficial emotional state.

I divide thoughts into things that help me, and things that don't. In a match, or pre-match situation, only think the thoughts that help. Pretty simple, very hard to do. If you are down 4-5 in the 3rd, think all the pressure is on them. If you are up 5-4 in the 3rd, all the pressure is on them. If you miss another forehand, you think you are due for a good one, not that you suck. If someone makes a bad line call against you, you say, "I guess they don't think they can beat me if they don't cheat. I've got them." If the wind is blowing, "I love the wind." If it is a very tight match, you convince yourself these are the matches you live for, the reason you play the game.

All this mental control is to get you in the right emotional space, which is one of high positive energy. "I love it." "I love tennis." "The crazier it gets, the better I am." "Suck it up, and turn it on."

Before you even walk on the court, you want to prime each of these areas, the mental, the emotional, the physical and the spiritual for peak performance. Peak performance is not an accident; you have to set the stage. And of course, there are still no guarantees of victory, but this gives you your best shot.

As a wise sports psychologist once said, "The person who said he had fun because he played well really has it backwards, you play well because you are having fun."

Getting in the Zone

Here are some of my tricks for getting in that happy, fun place, because I believe in the old adage, if you start well, you tend to finish well. I remember a college Professor once telling a concerned office full of his top students right before the big final not to worry, that he found that most people do about the same as they have done all term. C students don't suddenly pull out an A, and A students don't suddenly drop to a C.

We have already talked about the physical warm up, and the spiritual stuff was hopefully decided long ago, with only occasional adjustments. Mentally and emotionally, you need to warm up too, and put yourself in the conditions to succeed. One of the key concepts in the mental game is to act the way you want to feel. So, for example, if you want to be calm (I like to say the right mix is "calmness with energy"), then don't move around frantically right before your match. A four-wheel drift with your car as you slide into the last available parking space after a 90+ mph

drive down the freeway to avoid a default is not the best way to arrive to the match. Get there early, be deliberate, make sure you have all the stuff you need in your tennis bag. Don't get into heated discussions with anyone, and start thinking positively right away. Talking about how great your opponent is may take the pressure off ("heck, I don't have a chance, but I feel lose"), but

Quote of the Month:

*"I never paint blue dog purple,
except for when I do."
-- George Rodrigue*

it doesn't really help you find that positive place. I would often find a quiet place 15 or 20 minutes before a match, and just visualize my shots, and my playing well, both mentally and emotionally. I would go through my positive mental triggers, and by the time I hit the court, I was ready to rock.

In the warm-up, I make sure that I don't get frazzled. I don't chase after wild shots, or flail at balls I can barely reach. Better to let those shots go, and only hit shots that you can make, your confidence increasing with every shot that goes in, while your calmness sinks into an unshakable emotional base.

The Match Begins

Remember, always think thoughts that help you, thoughts that help you stay in your "happy place," the mental / emotional place where you play best.

Opponents often have bratty behaviors. Why, you may ask? Because it works. They take their opponent out of their game, and then they don't have to play someone who is play at her potential. Don't let the brat take you out of your game, out of what is in your long-term best interest. Often when a player is losing, they do something to try to distract their opponent. It may or may not be conscious, but it often works, but only if you let it. So don't let it be a distraction, make it be a motivation. Believe me, nothing feels as good as beating a jerk. When shaking hands, you can say, "It was a pleasure beating you today."

Always expect something to go wrong, and when it comes, smile and say, "There you are, I have been waiting for you, you ol' son of a gun." If you play a match and nothing is difficult, you are not good, just lucky. Wait for the bad line call, the bratty behavior, the lousy weather, the difficult personality, these are the things that make competing both challenging and fun (if you overcome them). It is best to have a plan for each of these, well rehearsed in your head, well before the match. What do you say to a person who just hooked you? (Calmly walk up to the net, with a strong physical presence, ask them if they were sure, let them answer, then turn away and focus on your strings, a few deep breaths, and getting ready for the next point, i.e. let it go. If it happens a predetermined number of times, ask for an official). You don't want to be making this tough response stuff up as you go (just like you don't make up your strokes as you go along, you have practiced), because you will lose your mental focus and spin out of control. A bad call never cost a player a match, but their reaction to the bad call has cost many players many matches.

Don't win the battle and lose the war. I was watching a match recently where in a tie-breaker, there was a disagreement about the score. Our player was ahead by 4 points, the opponent claimed 3, and our player realized that it wasn't that important to win the argument, the point was to win the tie-breaker. That is a competitor, because she remembered what she was trying to accomplish.

Sports psychologist Allen Fox says the goal of the game is to win. The question is, can you keep your mind on how to get to there, when there are so many temptations to get you off track. This is the essence of "thinking thoughts that help you," because it is with our conscious mind that we steer the ship and stay on course through the treacherous waters of competition.

Set breaks are huge, not only for rest, and the sense of starting over or even getting some coaching. Really focus at the beginning of a set. Set the tempo and try to get on top of them early. I often say to myself, the first game of a set is the most important game, especially the 2nd and 3rd sets.

More Mental Stuff: Strategy and Tactics

Have plan out there. How do you plan to win points? How would it be acceptable for you to lose points? ("If you don't know how to lose, you will never win"). Are you coming to the net? Staying back? Serve and volley? Players have a style of play that they do best, and then a couple of secondary plans. Switching to another plan can be the best, or worst thing you can possibly do (helpful huh?). I usually don't switch before playing an entire set. If it is close, one break (5-7, 4-6, 3-6, or a tie-break), I think long and hard before I make a change. In a match like this, I probably only needed to make another shot or two and I would be winning. You probably already have the right strategy (your best), you just need to execute better, or they need to execute worse (a real possibility, don't forget that). There was a playoff match recently where a team lost the first set 7-5, changed strategy and lost the second 6-0. Ouch. On the other hand, if you are trading crosscourt forehands and your opponent is just getting the better of you over and over again, perhaps it is time to go down the line, or move into the net. It is interesting to note that the tour pros seldom change their game; they place their bets on playing better (or their opponent playing worse). That is more likely than a baseliner suddenly becoming the John McEnroe of serve and volley. Playing a style you don't play very well is hard on the confidence, even if it is "working."

I don't recommend spending too much time thinking about how to hit the shots. This is best done in practice, and in a match you just want to let it go and play. This is hard to do, but if you focus on how to hit a ball, you won't have that automatic feel that is required to really zone. As a golf pro on Marin once said, "Trust it and bust it."

Back on the physical side of things:

1. Move at the speed of success. Find your rhythm, and don't let them take you out of it. We all have a speed that



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

Head Pro:

Patric Hermanson
PatricTennis@yahoo.com

Associate Pro:

Philip Laubscher

Junior Tennis Staff:

Scott Ho
Wing Fai Doud
Chris Michaels
Sarah Smith
Emily Jorgens

Weekend Staff:

Cortney Krakow

Newsletter Editor:

Keith Wheeler

Associate Editors:

Patric Hermanson

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we play best at, when we play poorly we often speed up and rush. Physically make yourself move at your rhythm, and your mental/emotional game will follow. When anxiety hits, rushing on the serve is particularly common.

2. Drink lots of water. This is probably the most important tip offered here.
3. Food. Make sure you have eaten the right foods before your match. Carbo loading works. It is not bad to have a banana, or some kind of energy bar or drink in your bag. You never know when today is going to be the three-hour match, and you only have enough food in your system for an hour and a half. It would be a shame to lose a match you could have won, just because you ran out of gas. "Fatigue makes cowards of us all."

After the Match

The most important question after the match is, "What did I learn today?" Please remember, no matter how great the win, or abysmal the loss, no match is the end all. There is always another day, and we are just travelers on the journey, and as my mentor has often said, "you are either getting better or getting worse, there is no neutral." Even at the moment of your greatest triumph or your worst nightmare defeat, there is something to learn.

And this view gives you that larger, over-all picture, that keeps your ego in check on the winning days, and the despair in check on the losing ones. "Short term pain, long term gain." It is rare that everything goes right, or everything goes wrong. How could you have competed better, given what you had to work with today? (I had no feel for my backhand today, so I needed to get up to the net and volley more). Other important questions: Did you stay in the high positive energy the whole match, or did that temper tantrum you had at the end of the second set cost you some crucial games? Were you able to mentally focus on thoughts that help you, or did you slip into doubt, anger and despair?

For the big match is never really over. It lives on in your head, and today's lessons lead to a better, stronger player tomorrow. Good luck out there!

Ace It! Slide Show

Be sure to go on the Club's website, and watch the wonderful slide show presentation to music put together by Linda Richardi. It is a wonderful tribute to a wonderful day. Summer began with this wonderful event, and here we are at Labor Day, finishing it off with the MTT grand finale and the August Twilight (8/24).

Orindawoods Junior Fall Clinic Schedule 2007

The 2007 Fall Junior Clinics begin the week of **August 27th**, and will continue thru the week of **December 10th**.

Program leader for the 15 week session is Head Pro **Patric Hermanson**. There are no classes the week of **Nov. 19-23**

Class	Times	1 day/wk	2 days/wk
Lil' Ones (age 4-6)	Tu-Th 3:15-4	\$145/\$160	\$225/\$240
Future Stars (7-10)	Tuesday 4-5:30 pm	\$295/\$320	n/a
Tennis Development	Thursday 4-5:30 pm	\$295/\$320	n/a
Tournament Training (invite only)	Friday 4:30-6 pm	\$275/\$300	n/a

The member price is the first price listed, while non-members pay the second amount.

We have factored into the cost of the clinics the potential of two weeks of missed classes due to rain, illness, vacations, etc. **The Future Stars Group** is for players with no tennis experience to those who have played a year or two. **The Tennis Development Group** is for our junior high schoolers and for the younger players who can consistently hit the ball back 4 to 5 times per rally and can serve the ball in from the baseline. **The Tournament Training Group** is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.

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.

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 \(no black soled shoes\)](#).