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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

League Play at the Woods

Lots of league action this Fall! On the weekends, we have our 7.5 Combo team continuing to play through the end of September. The Combo team is off to a great start. Go ladies! We have our Senior Ladies 3.0 and 3.5 teams starting up in September and playing throughout the Fall. Weekend matches at the Club begin at 11 a.m. (on courts 4, 5 & 6). Court 4 is a warm up court starting at 10:30 a.m..

On the weekdays, we feature 4 great teams: BALL A3, BALL Sr. C, Fall A2, and Fall B2. It should be a great fall for league tennis at the Club. Most weekday matches will be played on Mondays and Fridays. These matches take 3 courts (4, 5 & 6) and start at 9:30 in the morning. League rules dictate this early start time.

Monday Team Tennis Finale

It is coming down to the end of the season, and while first place is pretty much rapped up by Team Five, second place looks controlled by Team 4 (as well as Team 2's lock on the coveted last place, which earns a free "loser clinic" for the team with Keith).

Team	Ave. Wins/night	PCT
Team 5	58.43	.562
Team 4	54.71	.526
Team 1	51.63	.496
Team 3	51.00	.490
Team 6	49.71	.478
Team 2	46.71	.449

While Team 5 has led the entire season, it has not pulled away from the competition. Team 4 has recently wrestled control of second place from Teams 1 & 3, who have dropped off the pace right at the end. Even Teams 2 & 6 at the bottom, have won over 44% of the games. This means the matches have been very close this season, and every team has lost at least twice. It has all added up to a fun, competitive season of social tennis (see below). If you want to see the final standings, check out the Monday Team Tennis page on the Club's website (under events).

Tennis Tip

Social Tennis

I have often taken to heart the wisdom of one of my mentors, who once said, "You are either getting better or getting worse; there is no standing still."

With the just completed Monday Team Tennis season, I look back on what I have learned as a Tennis Director this year and I have to say, it is something to do with helping people to understand the nature of social tennis.

Our Club has always had a strong social tennis tradition, with Monday Team Tennis, and the Twilights, the drop in clinics and just a lot of people doing what they do best, having fun. Since I have been here quite a while now, I probably fell into the trap of thinking that most of you get the whole idea of social tennis, when in fact, it is quite a difficult concept to get. In other words, it often

Twilights This Summer

Time for another Twilight Tennis Party. We'll play some tennis (5-7 p.m., Keith's magic mixer), and eat a little steak (Kinder's, of course). Chicken if you please. Have some wine and beer, and chat it up with our friends and neighbors.

The next two Twilights are Friday, September 12 at 5pm and then a special weekend Twilight on Sunday, October 12.

To sign up, you can register on the Club's website, or call or e-mail Keith and let him know. Be sure to say if you are playing tennis, and what you want for dinner, steak or chicken. The cost is \$18 for just dinner, \$20 if you play tennis. Thanks.

Note: The Oct. 12 Twilight, tennis will be at 3-5pm, with dinner from 5-7 (due to the diminishing light).

Junior Tennis Fall Program

Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Associate Pro Philip Laubscher are running their great fall after school clinics beginning after Labor Day. See page 4 for all the details.

Brighter Beginnings

Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club is hosting a special fundraising event this year called Bright Beginnings to help unmarried women with young children. We have offered up to 4 of our courts for them to use to support this event, just as they have helped us tremendously with Ace It!

This event is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct 15. Tennis is from 9-12 noon, with lunch to follow at Sleepy Hollow. Tennis is coordinated through Sleepy Hollow, but some may be played here. To register, go to www.brighter-beginnings.org. The cost for this benefit is \$150. Flyers are in Tennis Club lobby.

Keith To Attend USPTA World Conference

Executive Tennis Director Keith Wheeler is planning to attend the USPTA World Conference in Palm Springs on September 16-20. Many of the leaders in the tennis industry will be there. Topics of discussion will be managing a club, playing doubles, tennis psychology and the latest trends in tennis.

Keith, and the rest of our tennis staff, are committed to improving themselves through continuing education, study and exploring with you the many challenges of the game of tennis, and life.

He looks forward to sharing new ideas with the membership upon his return in lessons and in this famously wonderful publication.

defies logic, or at least some of our major basic desires.

From the competitive point of view, we want to win, to be number one, to be king of the hill. But from the social point of view, we want to fit in, be accepted, have a fun time with our friends. These two can have a bit of a conflict, when they are supposed to happen together on a tennis court.

We all have differing reasons for playing tennis, but when we take part in a social game, reason number one has to be to enjoy each other's company, to have fun. Lose sight of this central idea, and you are lost.

If you go out there expecting a great hit, or a competitive match, or people that hit the ball the way I like, or anything else, you are setting yourself up for a very frustrating time, for you, and the other 3 people on the court, who, I might add, are going to comment on your lack of character to anyone who will listen. That's a bunch of folks.

If you are a competitive kind of guy or gal, like me, I look at social tennis this way. Say I'm playing 4 times this week. I have 3 intense matches, and a social match with my significant other. The driving for excellence, the all-out effort, the drive to win, the cussing and swearing, the sweat and the grind, that happens in those other three matches. In the social match, I leave my ego and my "A" game in the racquet bag, and focus on being with my friends.

Now problems happen if say, one, or God help us, two of your competitive games are rained out, cancelled, or are just plain lousy, and now, you have expectations that your social game will be "real tennis," or needs to fill your need for "real tennis." All I can say is, don't go there.

One of the great things about tennis is that men and women can play together, but we have some issues here. Egos are fragile, and can be on the line, and there can be concerns about safety too. Now in Pro Tennis, Mixed Doubles is called "hit the chick," but in social club tennis, this is not a good way to proceed, especially if you want to remain on speaking terms (let alone married) with your partner or having fun with everyone else on the court.

Of course there are other dynamics going on in social tennis that makes it very hard. For example, if you are a very good player, and you are playing socially, and you tone your game down a bit to be friendly, kind and a generally all-around great guy, and the other folks are trying as hard as they can to beat you (the star that you are), this is tough to manage. Especially, if at the end, they go on and on to anyone who will listen that they beat you (and forget to mention you weren't really trying). Of course if the stronger player wins, everyone expects it, and the stronger player gets no credit. In fact, they can be labeled kind of a louse for playing too hard or too well. It is a lose/lose situation for the better player, and why you often don't see better players wanting to play social tennis. We have to make it somehow fun and rewarding for better players, or they don't play.

Now the weaker player has problems too, especially if they get caught up in results too. They feel that they are letting the team down, because they make mistakes and don't play well. This can lead to trying too hard, which almost always leads to playing worse, not better. Players play best when they are relaxed, and having fun. Now this should be social tennis, but often it isn't.

In other words, in social tennis, results don't count, and you are crazy if you think they do. You are a fool if you are the stronger player (see above), and you are even a bigger fool if you are the weaker player, because that is a very good way to entice the stronger player to really hit one, and that means you are probably on the wrong end of an overhead, never a pleasant experience. This will result in the use of psychological warfare, "pick on someone your own side," (or the opposite sex version of that) and soon, everyone is having a lousy, or "guilty" time.

Then there is the whole rhythm thing. Every player has a preferred rhythm to their play. In social tennis, with different levels or players of different sexes playing, the ball often goes back and forth at different speeds, some soft, some hard. (This can also be the case in Combo League tennis). Most players rely on the way the ball comes to them, to maintain their rhythm. That is why most players are so easily thrown off their rhythm. It is up to you to maintain your rhythm. So, for example, when a ball comes much slower than you are used to, you need to keep moving your feet, and dancing until the ball gets there. Most people tell themselves, "this is an easy shot," and stop moving. Anchored to the ground, they swing and miss the shot, never really positioning themselves because it was "easy." Rather than admit it is their job to move, they blame the lousy tennis. Ever hear that one?

Now, if you really want to have a lousy time, get into coaching (see "Picking a Partner" for more on this). Coaching your partner is never a good plan, period. A good doubles partner, in social or competitive tennis, simply empowers their partner, nothing more, nothing less. Remember, being right has nothing to do with why coaching is bad.

Tennis Tip

Picking A Doubles Partner

So who plays well with whom, and what kinds of players make great doubles teams? It is an interesting question, and one that drives captains and players to craziness at times. Generally, I like a Finisher, and a Set Up Player together. In other words, if you have someone who is consistent, and accurate, they can often

Quote of the Month:

*"Practice doesn't make perfect,
it makes permanent."*

maneuver the ball into a place where a more power-oriented player (the Finisher) can close out the point.

For example an accurate serve down the middle in the deuce court by the Set Up Player can cause a return in the center of the court, where your Finisher at the net can put the volley or overhead away! Another example would be a good return from a Set Up Player low to the server's feet can often cause a pop up that your Finisher at the net can put away.

The other two combinations, two Finishers, or two Set Up Players may be satisfying in some ways (see below), but they each have big problems.

As for the preferred combination of the Set Up Guy and the Finisher, while often effective, there are some problems too. Simply put, they can drive each other crazy. And I hate to say it, but the Set Up Guy (that's me), tends to go crazy first. There you are, so patient and steady in your game, and you are the one losing your cool. It is hard to take, hard to accept, but it is the ugly truth. You just can't stand your partner spraying balls all over the court, some in, some out, in no particular pattern or consistency. The Set Up Play loves their Finisher, as long as the Finisher is hitting winners, but all Finishers take risks, and therefore go through slumps. Living with the slumps is tough, for the Set Up Player.

The temptation of the Set Up Player to give a few friendly, "helpful" tips ("Hit the @&*%*&% ball in") is usually what can break up these otherwise very effective teams.

This is not to say the Finisher doesn't lose it too. Often they are caught wondering, "Does the Set Up Player ever put the ball away?!!!" Or try on, "Is she ever going to come up to the fricking net and end this thing?"

In other words, after this team collects a trophy case full of prizes, they implode from inside, often vowing never to play with the other again. They are last seen storming away from the court in opposite directions, the Finisher saying "I want to play with someone who plays real tennis" and the Set Up Person caught saying, "Doesn't that Neanderthal know matches are lost, not won?"

Of course the Finisher/Set Up Player configuration is better than the Finisher/Finisher line up, except for the rare occasion when both Finishers are on. When that happens, this is beautiful to see, and they will simply blow any team you field off the court. Unfortunately, these "golden moments" don't happen that often ("once in a blue moon"). Usually, in this configuration, no one is hitting enough balls in the court. A double Finisher team can look great, play "good" tennis, seem to control every point, and just lose, and lose fast. They look good and have bad results.

So what about two Set Up Players? Better, but there are problems here. Set Up Players might not be very good at finishing, but they still can't understand when their partner can't finish. Perhaps there is a deep seated self-hatred of not being able to finish themselves, that comes out in blaming their partner, but the simple truth here is that with two Set Up Players, no one is putting the ball away. In doubles, a team that has some offense usually beats a team that has just defense. The team that just plays defense is counting purely on their opponents' errors, and with two people on the court in doubles it is easy to maneuver one of those players into a position when they can finish, and when they are in that position, you are going to win many more points if you finish, rather than if you play steady (even if you miss some of those attempted finishes).

Many times the Set Up Player was a singles player, and with only one player on your side of the net, and only one opponent, defense works. Singles is all about consistency. To be a successful attacking player in singles takes a great deal of skill. But in doubles, some offense, if done with even moderate proficiency, pays off.

So for doubles teams, we are back to a Set Up Player, and a Finisher, but who are these players anyway and how do we keep them together?

The truth is, we all have to be a bit of both, a Set Up Player and a Finisher. There are times when you should be the set up person (usually when you are in the back or mid court in doubles) and there are times when you need to finish the point or hit a very difficult shot for them to return (generally when you are at the net).

This gets us back to last month's article (available on the website), that we all need to have the flexibility in our game to adjust to different roles and conditions. We all struggle to have this flexibility and balance out our game, and most people are more comfortable with one role than the other.

While our discussion is primarily about doubles here, we can look to pro tennis and certainly see that Federer is more of a Finisher, Nadal more of a Set Up guy. Obviously these guys are so good they can do both, but they have a favorite role they like to play given a choice. You do too.

So we all need to practice a bit at our weaker role, while not neglecting our strength (this is often a problem in practice or lessons, players focus too much on their weakness, while their strengths need attention too to remain strengths. Then, there are those other folks who are in denial).

We've all played with the slugger who looks awesome and intimidating at the net, but can't buy a return of serve. Then there is the player that you set the ball up for perfectly, and they just hit this soft, consistent shot back to the bad guys, and you are saying to your self, "This point should be over." Especially if it is on your serve.

Lots of players try to get around being balanced by trying to avoid their weakness ("Mildred, I just don't go to the



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net, so don't ask me to come up there. I'll go up there to shake hands, but that's it. I'm drawing the line right there."), but a good opponent can sniff your weakness out, and make your day pretty miserable (not to mention your partner's). Think of the nightmare match where a couple of set up players camp out on the baseline and just lob the ball back and forth. No one has a dependable overhead, and therefore, no one can end the point (at least positively).

As we discussed last month, it is our ability to adjust to different circumstances and roles, to be at one moment the Set Up Guy, and the next the Finisher, sometimes in the same point, that will take us the farthest. And of course, we want that guy for our partner. Just beware, that fellow who can do both is a good player, and he is going to expect the same in return.

Many players ask me, where should I play, deuce or add side? As you know by now, I think doubles is won in the middle, so I like to put players best shots there. Finishers tend to have big forehands, and good overheads (or at least scary overheads), so I generally put them on the add side. Even if they have a big backhand, this is still a good place to put them, as many people serve out wide in the add court, and then the Finisher can hit a big cross court shot that is tough for the server to handle with their backhand.

There are not as many opportunities to win the point from the deuce side, so that is a good place for the Set Up Player. It is important for the deuce side player to get a lot of balls in play, so they will need a good backhand (it's in the middle), and a dependable forehand. It is also important to be able to lob from this side, so a right-handed net player on the other team doesn't dominate the middle with his forehand volley.

Some Finishers will say, "I can hit my big forehand cross-court from the deuce side" (that is why this side is often mistakenly referred to as the "forehand side"). This may be true, but good opponents won't give you very many forehands to hit because they will place the ball in the middle. If you try to run around it, then they will then serve wide, and you will be lost and your best weapon will be neutralized. On the add side, you will get more balls in the middle, and thus more forehands. Finishers, repeat after me, "I'll take the add side." Good luck out there!

Orindawoods Junior Fall Clinic Schedule 2008

patricTennis@yahoo.com, 254-1065

The Fall program begins the week of September 1 and runs for 15 weeks. Head Pro Patric Hermanson will lead the classes, with assistance from Associate Pro Philip Laubscher and our junior tennis staff. There are no classes the week of November 24-28. The weekly schedule is:

Tennis Clinics

<u>Class</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-member</u>
Little Ones	Tues and/or Thurs	3:15-4pm	\$145/\$225	\$160/\$240
Future Stars	Tuesday	4pm-5:30pm	\$295	\$320
Tennis Development	Thursday	4pm-5:30pm	\$295	\$320
Tournament Training	Friday	4:30pm-6pm	\$275	\$300

For the Little Ones, you have the choice of once or twice a week (first price is for once a week). 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 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 the second sibling. Discount taken off the lower of the two prices. Incllement Weather: in the case of questionable weather (rain), please call the Pro Shop for a court condition update.

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