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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](http://www.orindawoodstennis.com)

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

## **Tulip Tournament April 24<sup>th</sup>**

It's time to Tulip! Our annual spring social ("Adiós El Niño") party will be held on Sunday, April 24 from 1 to 4 p.m.. No charge for this one. All levels are welcome. We will play mix-and-match social tennis for 2-3 hours, and socialize on the deck afterwards. Do to the uncertainty of the weather this time of year (certain it will rain?), there is no major food planned, just hors d'oeuvre. Bring your favorite beverage!

To sign up, contact Keith at the club ([orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net)) or Lysbeth McNeill, the head tulip.

## **Ace It! Breast Cancer Event June 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Save the date:** Ace It!, our annual Breast Cancer Awareness Day is Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. The morning session 8:30-12 is our Tour Of The Pros clinics. Then the Ace It! Lunch is from 12-1. From 1-4 p.m. is the Ace It! Tournament. All fees collected go to support the Breast Center at Alta Bates. **Register on [orindawoodstennis.com](http://orindawoodstennis.com).**

## **Attack Or Defend**

Craig O'Shaunessy's fine studies of statistics in tennis (think *Moneyball* but for tennis) shows us that most doubles points end in 0-4 shots (81% in Men's, 68% in women's). That means that your team may get two shots, if you are lucky. So basically, the future is now, the outcome is here, and you need to take advantage of the situation, or your opponent will. You'll rarely get a second chance.

There are situations in tennis where we will get the best results by being offensive, and there are other moments where we will do better by defending. The trick is to know what situation you are currently in. If you play it safe at a time that favors attack, you will not win as many points as if you went for it. If you attack, from a defensive situation, that will not work so well either. Of course most players are predisposed to attack or defend. Which are you? And the key to improvement becomes improving your less natural tendency, and doing both attacking and defending when it is appropriate.

There are built-in scenarios in doubles that we must learn to use, or we will not be maximizing our potential in our tennis. This month, let's study these:

**First Serve, Serving Team:** The serving team should have the advantage. Through using a combination of the four weapons (time, spin, placement and deception), the server should be able to force a return back through the middle. And the server's partner should move towards the middle and intercept that return. If the server's partner gets passed down the alley, it is on the server for not hitting a good enough serve. It's important to stress that a good serve is not just power, or even power, it is doing something that makes the returner hit the ball back through the middle. I've seen players with very slow serves place the ball so well that the defender just has to return the ball through the middle. The server takes chances here, aims for the edges, and mixes up the speed, spin, and placement. If the returner is able to get the ball back to the server (avoids the net person), attack the receiver's partner with the next shot. They are off the net and vulnerable. A huge mistake that serving teams make is that if the returner gets the ball past the server's partner, the server goes into rally mode. If the serving team's best chance is to have their net player hit the ball, their second best chance is for the server to hit a groundstroke towards the out-of-position net player on the receiver's side who is off the net.

**First Serve, Receiving Team:** The receiving team doesn't know what is coming. They need to adopt a defensive mentality. Get the ball back if they can. Consistency is king. Play the ball through the middle of the court. I know, the server's team knows it is going there, but your best chance is to hit a shot that leaves them little angle, and puts the pressure on them to put it away. It is very rare in doubles that the receiving team

## **Monday Team Tennis**

(starting in May!)

It is time to register for the BIG ONE, the EVENT OF THE YEAR, the MOST FUN YOU CAN HAVE ON A TENNIS COURT, etc... Yes, we are talking Monday Night Team Tennis. It is back, and ready to start in early May. May 9<sup>th</sup> to be exact.

That means, registration is open for the upcoming season. I would like to take members of Orindawoods first, and then, if necessary, fill in with some other folks as needed. So MEMBER ONLY REGISTRATION will be through **April 15**. Please sign up as soon as possible, so that I will know if I need non-members or not. Thanks!

It is always hard to strike a balance between not enough players and too many. It is a long season, and people travel. We don't expect everyone to be able to play each week, so if you are going out of town for a vacation, don't let that stop you from signing up!

The season will run May 9 through August 22. There will be no formal MTT on Memorial Day or the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, but the courts will be set up for Party On! for those who wish to party on! Naturally.

MTT will include Men's, Women's and Mixed doubles.

The cost for the entire summer is \$50 for members. Of course each night includes dinner (often gourmet). You will be asked to help contribute to the side dishes on the nights your team has dinner (a couple of nights during the summer).

hits more than one winner in a game. Often there are none. But there are breaks of serve. How? The serving team misses. That's your best play as a defender, keep it in, and wait for misses. Defense means that the receiver's partner should be in a defensive position as well, either on the service line, or if the serving team is really strong (big server and/or great net player), on the baseline with the returner. In other words, take away the places it is easy to hit a winner for the serving team. Make them try angles when there are few angles to hit. Encourage more mistakes.

**Second Serve, Serving Team:** The shoe is on the other foot. No more surprise for the serving team, you have to get the ball in. Consistency is king. Get the ball in, and defend. Server's partner is vulnerable here, so pick a side where you think the ball will go and defend that. The weaker the serve / stronger the returner, the more that choice has to be the alley. Players often ask me, "Should I back up?" I say no, get more time by guessing, not by putting yourself in a weaker position. So if you guess forehand, and the ball goes to the backhand side, let it go (duck if necessary). Because the net players range is limited (because they are guessing), the server has to be in "singles" mode. You are covering most of the court. This is probably a good time to say that the serving team should be getting about **67% first serves in to be successful** in doubles. After reading this paragraph, it's easy to see why.

**Second Serve, Receiving Team:** The server has to get it in. Most second serves land in the middle of the box, they are slower, and they are not as deep. Before they serve, move in, and take a step towards your backhand side, so that unless it is a perfect serve, you are hitting a forehand. Based on what you think the net person is doing, drive the ball through the middle (Plan A: 70% of the time), or down the alley (Plan B: 30%). The receiver's partner should position themselves more forward than on the first serve (near the middle of the box) and after the returner hits the ball, move into the middle. If the returner's partner gets passed down the alley, it is on the returner (the return was too weak). Think attack. This is your big chance, don't play it safe (just start a rally). Go big, to makeable targets.

**Now or Never:** Here is the interesting fact, the "advantage" last about two shots. If the offensive team hasn't won the point in their first two shots, the odds even out, there is no advantage, and we might even see a situation where the team that was defending, gets an opportunity to attack. So defending is about surviving their first two shots. Attacking is about finishing in your first two shots.

**Great Practice Drill:** play a few games were the attacking team (serving team, first serve; returning team, second serve) can only win the point if they win it in their first two shots. The defending team wins if the rally goes past four shots (two for each team). This is a great way to practice being in the right frame of mind. Good luck out there!

### ***Indian Wells: Lessons from the Desert***

*This March many of the Club's members went down to the desert to watch the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Executive Tennis Director Keith Wheeler went too, and has the following reflections:*

**On Serving: Kvitova v. Kovnic:** Kovnic consistently served harder, 112 mph to 104 mph, but there was no question if you were watching who had a better serve. Kvitova had better spin, placement, deception, thus higher percentage, equal aces and won many more points on her first serve. Spin is a great add on to power, and if like Kvitova, you're left handed, even better. So the obsession with the radar gun (speed) is misplaced. Speed is important, and perhaps even the most important part of a serve, but the other bits is what gives you a dominant shot. Kvitova certainly served hard (and probably could have hit the ball much harder), but used her resources to spin, place and deceive as well for a better overall result. The goal in serving is 1) begin the point, 2) break down your opponent's form (to create errors), and 3) force where their return will go if they get it back to give you a head start on the next shot. Percentage of first serves, and percentage of first serve points won will tell you who has the best serve, not aces or highest radar gun speed.

**On Serving And Returning:** There is an old golf saying, "Drive for whoa, putt for dough." In other words, some shots are really impressive, but it is often other smaller, subtler shots that make you a winner. In pro tennis, everyone serves well. You have to, or you don't get in the door. But what makes the champions is who returns well. The top five servers are often in the top 20 or 30 in the world, but the top five returners are usually 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, or close to it. Watching Andy Murray over the weekend, you could really see that. He got more balls back, did more with them, returned more great serves, and kept the constant pressure on the server. In doing so, he just gives himself a lot better chance to win. One of the least practiced shots in tennis is the return of serve. And it is the second most important shot. Get out and work on your return today!

**On Doubles: Isner / Raonic v. Murray / Fleming:** Modern Doubles is based on knowing when to attack and when to defend (see article "Attack or Defend"). In this match, the net person was very aggressive on the first serve. By aggressive, I mean they move right on top of the net (Can't miss zone). There were lots of miss hits, especially on return of serve, and at the net. Both teams were playing for less time, getting as close as possible. Hitting the ball sooner was valued over hitting it clean. All four players stood as close as they could and be able to get a reasonable number of shots back. That means on the strongest shots, they accept missing or a mishit.

The one exception was against big servers and aggressive net play, the receiving team played two back on all first serves. For the second serve, the returner's partner would move up. Since both teams tended to serve and volley,



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### Quote of the Month:

*"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so." – Mark Twain*

there was lots of poaching by the receiver's partner on the second serve points. Most servers will hit their first volley (very difficult shot) cross-court, so this is a good time to poach. Again, the goal is give the opponent less time.

When the other team had the upper hand, the defending team (usually the receiving team, especially on first serves) would return a ball that gave the attacking team no angle. The defensive player would hit the ball to the net person in the middle, between where the net person was standing and the center strap (students of mine know this area as Window #2). The defenders were not afraid to hit to the net person, just not in an area where they could angle. This meant the net person's volley would be returned back to the center, and the defending team could work their way into the point.

**On Momentum:** Tennis is a social interaction. What happens to one player, affects what happens to the other. In several matches, there were close first sets, both players playing well. One player wins, and the other often lose confidence. The winner, buoyed by victory, and sensing their opponent's loss of energy, gains confidence and energy. Both Gasquet & Berdych experienced this phenomenon in their opening singles matches. Highly contested first sets, pulling away in the second set.

One of the **crucial points** in a match is right after you have won or lost a set, captured or lost a break of serve, or after a point that seems to have large emotional significance (great shot, long rally, lucky winner, bad line call). It is really important to win the next point or game after significant events to either continue your dominance, or break your opponent's spell.

**On Shot Selection:** If you have a choice between simple and complicated, take simple. Several times I saw players try very difficult shots, touch shots, in situations where there was a lot of pressure, and fine motor skills were compromised. In most cases, this is a form of choking, and often involves the drop shot.

**So A Warning:** Don't fall in love with your drop shot. It's a mean and nasty affair that almost always ends badly, breaking your heart and crushing your dreams. In the Granollers v. Murray match, the points we well contested, and the match was very even. Murray barely won the first set, and Granollers had a real opportunity to win the second. At crunch time, in a relatively long and even rally, he tired a drop shot, which was the least likely way to win a point. Murray covered it. Granollers, upset that he has missed an opportunity, also lost the next point, and the opportunity slipped away.

**On Pressure and Big Points:** Pressure melts your brain. You try things (like drop shots) at really stupid times. Often the difference between the player that won, and the player that lost, was shot selection at the crucial times. The higher ranked, more experienced players would often just get the ball back, and let the other guys try something dumb. Self-restraint is unbelievably important when the pressure is on, and about the last thing we naturally want to do. Stay cool. Only hit shots you can make.

**On The Fine Margins:** How close is a tennis match? Victory is often one net cord away. At 3-4 in the second set tiebreaker, Granollers' backhand is heading down the line for a winner, but it clips the net cord, pops up, and Andy Murray is able to track the ball down and hit a forehand winner. Mini breaker, Murray goes on to win the second set and the match. That's how close these matches can be, one net cord.

**On The Real Warm-up:** Want to get a lot better without having to change hardly anything? Get a good warm up. Pros get out and hit for 30-40 minutes before their matches. They practice all the shots, and they get warmed up (sweating). It is a friendly, cooperative experience with their coach, partner or teammate. Get ready for the match.

**On The Faux Warm-up:** The five-minute warm up is to get used to the courts, the surroundings, how your opponent hits the ball. If you watch pros, and I mean 100% of the pros, they **hit the ball back** to their opponents (no ripping winners), they rally **easily** at about 50-75% power, and they just get a **rhythm** going. They spend about **40% of the warm up time hitting serves**, and they hit some **volleys** and **overheads**, even if they rarely come to the net. **At Orindawoods** it drives me absolutely crazy that our opponents get here first, warm up better and are more ready to play than most of our teams. Momentum matters. Don't think coming out blazing doesn't affect the outcome and the social hierarchy (see Momentum). Good luck out there!

## ***Summer Junior Tennis At Orindawoods***

Welcome to the 2016 Orindawoods Summer Junior Tennis Program. Our Summer Program consists of eight one-week (Monday – Thursday) clinics. In addition to taking our young players’ games to a new level, our four-day clinics are full of good fun and good friends. Our energetic and professional staff led by Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa has put together a positive and challenging instructional environment that will allow the students to grow both as tennis players and as people. Our clinics will suit the beginner, just starting out, as well as the advanced player preparing for the summer and fall tournaments. Nonmembers are very welcome in all of our Summer Tennis Clinic classes.

Our **Full Afternoon Clinic** is for kids 7-16. Players will be separated according to age and ability. The Full Clinic will be run from 12:00 to 3:45pm and consist of an *Instructional Block* from 12:00-2:00pm, where we will be developing the strokes, strategy and the footwork used in today’s “modern game of tennis.” Tennis games will also be a daily part of this block. There will be a break from 2:00-2:15pm. Players should bring a snack for the break. At 2:15pm the *Match Play Block* will begin, where the kids will play supervised matches. The coaches will help the students understand how to use their strokes and strategy to enhance their match playing capabilities. Our younger students will work with many aspects of the USTA 10 and under Program, making it easy for even the young beginner to play matches. The Full Clinic day will finish at 3:45pm.

If you are looking for a shorter tennis experience, you can sign up for our **Half Clinics**. Pick what you are most interested in and join just one of our two tennis blocks, the *Instructional Block* or the *Match Play Block*.

Underneath the moniker of **Half Clinics**, we are also listing the Lil’ Ones Clinic. This clinic is for the 4-6 year olds, and will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4-4:45pm.

*We hope to see you this summer at Orindawoods! Make sure to sign up early!*

### **Clinic Schedule:**

<b>Orindawoods Clinics</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Cost Per Week Member / Nonmember</b>
<b>Full Clinic</b>				
Afternoon Clinic	Ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	12noon-3:45pm	\$210 / \$235
<b>Half Clinics</b>				
Instruction Block	Ages 7-16	Monday -Thursday	12noon-2pm	\$135/ \$150
Match Play Block	Ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	2:15-3:45pm	\$110/ \$125
Lil’ Ones Clinic	Ages 4-6	Tuesday & Thursday	4:00-4:45pm	\$40 / \$45

### **2016 Enrollment Form**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child’s Name (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Child’s Name (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMERGENCY CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Session 1	June 13-16	<b>Full Clinic</b> ___	<b>Half Clinic:</b> Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil’ Ones ___
Session 2	June 20-23	<b>Full Clinic</b> ___	<b>Half Clinic:</b> Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil’ Ones ___
Session 3	June 27- 30	<b>Full Clinic</b> ___	<b>Half Clinic:</b> Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil’ Ones ___
Session 4	July 5-7*	<b>Full Clinic</b> ___	<b>Half Clinic:</b> Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil’ Ones ___
Session 5	July 11-14	<b>Full Clinic</b> ___	<b>Half Clinic:</b> Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil’ Ones ___
Session 6	July 18-21	<b>Full Clinic</b> ___	<b>Half Clinic:</b> Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil’ Ones ___
Session 7	July 25-28	<b>Full Clinic</b> ___	<b>Half Clinic:</b> Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil’ Ones ___
Session 8	August 1-4	<b>Full Clinic</b> ___	<b>Half Clinic:</b> Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil’ Ones ___

*\* Three days only. No class on Monday, July 4th*

### **Total Clinic Costs:**

Child (1) cost: \_\_\_\_\_ + Child (2) cost: \_\_\_\_\_ - Discount for Child (2) \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **ORINDAWOODS**

Discount: 10% off the second child’s registration in the same week. The discount is taken off the smaller of the two clinic costs.

Mail to: Orindawoods Tennis Club, 650 Orindawoods Drive, Orinda, CA 94563