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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

Pool Renovation and Related Changes

The pool renovation is almost complete. If you haven't seen the great new tile, check it out. Very good looking.

In addition to doing the pool work, the Club was required to make some changes for handicap access. This will include two handicap parking places, a ramp and changes in pool access.

While it may seem crazy to give up two or three of our very limited number of parking places in light of the fact that only one person in a wheel chair has been here in fourteen years, this is the law and these parking places will be installed. Whether the police will enforce parking infractions, I do not know, but you go ahead and park there first. I think I'll wait and see.

Ball Machine Club

The Ball Machine Club for 2009 is underway. The season runs from March 1 to February 28. It is not too late to sign up or renew your membership. The cost is \$100 for the year.

Remember, that the ball machine can be used before 8:30am or after 10:30 a.m. on weekdays (12 noon on weekends). No ball machine reservations are allowed in lighted court time. If you drop in, and no one is playing, you can use the ball machine during prime time.

Monday Team Tennis

MTT will start in early June and play every Monday night for most of the summer. Play starts each night at 6pm and we play until about 9 p.m.. There is men's, women's, mixed doubles and triples. We divide all the players into teams. Each evening includes a dinner. Remember to bring your own beverages. Sodas are available for purchase at the Club. The cost for the team tennis season is \$45 for Orindawoods members, for non-members (on a very limited space available basis) it is \$65.

Tennis Tip

The Weakest Shot in a Point

Most of us have played tennis for many years, and yet almost everyone fails to recognize the consistently weakest shot we will be receiving. This shot represents the greatest opportunity that you are going to get on a consistent basis. In fact, if I asked most people what was the weakest, most attackable shot that is hit to you, most would get the answer wrong. So which shot is the weakest shot during a point, on average?

In some ways, this is a trick question, because occasionally this shot is not weak, and it is often not a weak shot on the tennis we watch on TV, but it is in Club and league tennis. Need another clue? This shot is the most important shot in tennis too. If it is really weak, as I am suggesting here, you can really be in trouble if you are playing someone who can see it for what it is?

Give up? The weakest shot you are going to see repeatedly in club tennis is the serve. Yes, the serve. Forget Andy Roddick's bombs, most serves suck. They are short, they bounce high, and they are predictable.

Guest Fees & Membership Responsibilities

Remember that guest fees at Orindawoods are \$5 (there is no longer any prime time for guest fees, it is \$5 all day long). Since Orindawoods is an open property that we can all walk into, paying the guest fees is the personal responsibility of each and every member. Members are responsible to pay for their guests (if the guest wants to pay, that's fine, but it is your responsibility to see that payment happens).

Envelopes are provided by the office door for members to pay their guest fees if there is no one in the office when you walk on the courts.

Since Orindawoods Tennis Club is operated by a homeowner's association, our accounting software is set up for that circumstance, and we can't bill any of our services other than monthly dues. So guest fees, lesson fees, junior program registration all other expenses occurred at the Club must be paid at the time of use. Pay as you go.

Paying your guest fees actually keeps costs down, and allows us to offer the Orindawoods membership at such a reasonable rate. If we had to reconfigure the entrance of the Club to have you pass a front desk to enter, and if we had to staff that desk every hour the Club was open, we would have to charge dues in the \$125-\$135 range (with no other change than that, same courts, same pool. That is how much additional staffing would cost each of you). Since we are all responsible individuals who care about each other, members have been very good about paying their guest fees in the past. The individual \$5 that we collect all add up to the income that several additional memberships would provide, thus again, keeping dues down. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Ace It!

Our Breast Cancer Awareness Event is on Saturday, June 27. In the morning we will feature clinics with many of the area's top teaching pros. There is a wonderful lunch on the deck in the middle of the day, and then that is followed by the Ace It! Tournament in the afternoon. It is a wonderful day of tennis, camaraderie and coming together in support of women's health and wellbeing. Over the several years we have held this event, we have raised, by small individual donations like yours, close to \$100,000. More than that, however, the sense of community and fellowship has inspired so many to live healthy and caring lives. Join us!

Now, like the rest of tennis, you need to be good at math. Some players can fool you. They may hit it really hard, especially on the first serve, but how many of those are really going in? Unless the player has a lot of skill, that number is usually pretty small. So I suggest, you just ignore their best shots (be willing to lose the 20-30% of these they can get in), and stand where you can handle their average serve.

And their average serve? Think about that. First of all, the ball has to land in a small box, that is behind the net, so there is a real limit to how hard they can hit the ball and get it in (unless they have the skill to apply a great deal of spin, which very few people can do). You know the ball is going to be sort, or it is out. And not only that, but out of the whole court, they basically have to hit it right to you (your half, or less, in doubles). And, if you needed any more help, because this shot is struck from a considerable height (over their head), it generally bounced up pretty high, at least above the height of the net.

If you can make contact above the height of the net, you can drive the ball forward, rather than have to worry about hitting it up. This means that you can hit the ball much harder, and with less spin, than most shots you hit (which are often below the height of the net and clear back at the baseline).

The trick to punishing the short ball (whether it is a serve, or any other ball that lands short) is to have a horizontal swing. That is, rather than swinging low to high (as we all learned) to hit topspin, or slicing (high to low), we are now going to hit a mostly flat shot (little spin, thus more speed). In order to take a horizontal swing, it is crucial that we catch the ball at or near the height of the bounce. To do this, we want to position ourselves far enough in to be in the area where we are hitting where the ball's flight is at its crest.

The how to of this shot is a bit tricky and takes some practice. Speaking in basic terms, to swing horizontal, the racquet has to start at the same height as contact, and finish at basically the same height. The racquet face needs to be square to the ball, or even slightly pointed down (depending on how high the ball is, and how forceful your swing). To square the racquet face on a high ball, the hardest thing for the average hacker, you need to rotate, or raise your elbow up to shoulder height. If you usually hit high balls long (that crashing into the back fence sound), you are not raising your elbow up enough. Obviously, if your grip is more towards the Western end of things, as opposed to continental, it will be easier to hit high balls. If your shots are going into the net, then you are usually swinging forward too much with your arm and racquet, rather than bringing your shoulder and body through. Remember, tennis is a game that should be played with the body, and not just the arm.

The final little trick is that if you hit a ball flat, you don't have to swing very hard to make it go fast. Most shots don't go that fast because we are imparting spin on the ball (spin is for control, after all). A lot of our energy is going into the spin, not the speed. So if you hit a high ball flat, with a horizontal swing, it will go fast without putting too much effort into it. Most players over hit these shots. Remember, if the ball is short, the distance between you and your opponent is less (especially if they are at the net), and they will therefore not have very much time to react.

In conclusion, take the ball at the height of the bounce, swing horizontal, and back off on the effort. Soon you will be dominating the mid court in a way you never thought possible, and no one will want to play against you any more. Good luck out there!

Reflections on the PNB Paribas Open

The View From Indian Wells

This past weekend Executive Tennis Director Keith Wheeler and over fifty Club members and friends spent a wonderful weekend at the BNP Paribas Open down in Indian Wells, California. All the top players in the world (except the Williams' sisters, who seem to be allergic to the desert) were there. It is so exciting to watch the best players in the world compete, but more than that, we can learn a lot from their tactics, attitudes, practices and the way they hit the ball. And have a bit of fun at the same time.

The practice courts are a very interesting place to hang out at the tournament. Not only can you see the players up close, but you can see how they practice and prepare for the matches. On Saturday, I got to see both Ana Ivanovic and Roger Federer warm up, and then play their matches a couple of hours later. Both drew huge crowds on the practice courts, and in the stadium.

Federer's practice session was particularly interesting in that he seemed to have a real focus on just trying to be

loose and fluid. Many of his shots were all over the place, but you got the sense he was just trying to get the feel of the racquet and the ball. The practice was fun, and he attempted many trick shots in an effort to stay mentally interested and loose too. Think how many hours this guy must spend on a court, and still need to keep it fresh and interesting to perform at the highest level. Never underestimate the importance of staying present, and having fun is one of the best ways to stay there.

Federer's workout is a good model for all of us preparing for a match. He only hit

Quote of the Month:

"I don't eat the fish, I sell the fish." -- Large Italian waiter at the authentic restaurant Castelli's in Palm Desert, when asked what kind of white fish they were serving that night.

for about thirty minutes, and worked his way through all the shots. He started with easy ground strokes, then volleys, overheads, then quite a selection of lobs and finished with serving and returning. He played out a couple of points, but he was mostly isolating individual skills as opposed to putting it all together.

When he got to practicing the serve, he started with a couple of very interesting drills. First he hit the ball very slow, and from a three-quarter-arm position, trying to get as much spin on the ball as he could with a very loose, easy motion. He started up inside the baseline and worked his way back to the serving position. He just looped the ball into the court, very loosey goosey. Then he started hitting normal looking serves, but very loose and he tried to hit them very long, clear to the other baseline, or longer. At first you just thought he was missing, but after several, you could tell it was intentional. This is the old Pancho Gonzales drill that works on power and looseness that I learned from Vic Braden, the great innovative tennis teacher. It is actually quite difficult to hit a serve clear to the back fence on the fly. Then came the normal serves. While Federer's serve looks good, it is not until he is in the match that you realize that it is probably the best serve in tennis right now. It is such a smooth, easy motion, but speed is good (around 125 most of the time) and his accuracy and disguise are exquisite. Ace after ace flows out of this easy motion, and you get the feeling that he can serve his way out of most predicaments. The serves that are returned are, due to the effectiveness of his delivery, usually left in the middle of the court, where he flows right into his forcing forehand game. You can see why he is so tough to beat, staking one weapon on top of another.

He is also the only singles player I have seen in the past few years who can win a point at the net when his opponent rips a ground stroke. Every other player seems at such a disadvantage when they are forced to volley.

As a nice side note, at the end of his practice, Federer must have spent ten minutes signing hundreds and hundreds of autographs. Here is a man who understands that tennis is entertainment, and the fans are an important part of that, and not an annoyance.

Ivonovic is the perfect model of the modern women's game. The emphasis is on power groundstrokes, hit mostly flat, with little spin, and delivered with blistering pace. She can live with the errors, knowing that if she powers enough in, her opponent will return few.

Her practice centered around driving the ball, and dominating points with the serve, return, and forehand. She knows who she is, what she does well, and goes about doing it. This is why confidence is so important for all players, but especially players playing this more offensive style (think Jimmy Connors and you have the model for this style from an earlier era). After blasting her way to #1 last year, Ivonovic had a couple of injuries, lost the belief a bit, and had a terrible second half of the year. Like Federer, her practice was oriented on her strengths. His was staying loose, hers was going after her shots. She is not a player who wants to get in long rallies and rely on movement. These are not her strengths.

In the stadium she was matched up against a player that played the way many juniors and club players play singles, lots of spin, retrieving shots, trying to be consistent. Good height over the net, always hitting shots that she could make. There are many players like this in the women's game, and few of them are at the top. When you get to the top players almost all of them hit huge. Right now, in the women's game, the retrievers can't seem to get enough balls back, and the power players win. Only the very fastest women players can defend and survive.

Daniella Hantuchova was practicing on the court next to Federer. She is another tall, powerful player that goes for her shots. The same emphasis on going for the shot. She does drills to work on her movement so that it isn't too much a liability, but she knows she is going to win by making big shots often.

Dinara Safina played the same direct style, big shots, big power, attempting to blast her opponent into errors or weak shots. All these big hitters really work on returning serve (see above article), because this is often a short ball that can be attacked. Pressuring the serve is one of the most effective strategies in tennis right now.

Rafael Nadal and **Gail Monfils** play the more prevalent men's style, which involves more topspin on most shots, only flattening the stroke out when there is a clear opening. Where Monfils hit huge in practice, Nadal seemed to hit bigger during his match, but always with a lot of spin. Players like Nadal and Monfils are so fast on their feet and they are playing players almost as fast, the big flat power shots do not pay off (like in the women's game where the players are slower a foot). Of course the heavy spin causes other problems for your opponent as well.

Nadal's forehand was a great example of how the best players seem to preload their muscles to explode on contact with the ball. Right before the ball arrives, Nadal drops and folds his racquet back and in just a bit more, creating a stretch in his forearm muscles that unloads at impact. He seems to hit the ball late almost all the time, but with this prestretch of the muscle the racquet comes through so fast. We see this as racquet head speed, but this movement is actually the reaction to the conscious backwards stretching and timing movement, rather than a conscious strike or snap at the ball. Speed is the effect, not the cause. For power, Nadal's swing would flatten out more through the ball, where as for control he would lift the racquet over his head with his famous reverse follow through.

All the men serve so well. This is the best defense against your opponent attacking your short shot that starts the point. Most men still hit pretty big on the second serve, for this very reason. American **John Isner** was a great



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example, often hitting in the 130 mphs, his motion was so smooth and easy. Natural power that came from the body, and no hint of over swinging. In fact, one huge difference you see between club players and pros, which I think we can all learn from, is that the pros, when they hit hard, get looser, while most club players tend to tighten up and use muscles. The pros use good body position (leverage) and looseness (speed), put together by rhythm and timing to generate force. They let the racquet move (fast) rather than force it.

Margarita Time

Watching tennis, match after match, in the hot Indian Wells sun can be tiring. But fortunately, "the committee" has come up with a game to make those long matches a little easier to take. Yes, the mid-match doldrums have been conquered by the Margarita Game. It is simple concept really, but the Margarita Game can refresh the mind and sprit in the baking hot sun. All you need is a court with a match time clock, and a radar gun. Stadiums one and two provided such entertainment. If a player hits a serve where the speed matches the match time (say 125 mph, 1 hour and 25 minutes) you win. Everyone raises their arms and says, "Margarita." If the fans next to you don't get the joke, well, they need to lighten up a bit. We have yet to convince the Indian Wells Tennis Garden to buy the crowd a Margarita when ever this happens, but we are presently in negotiations.

Of course there are small windows of opportunities in a long match. For the women, it usually comes around the hour mark, when many women serve in the 101 to 110 range. For the men, it is a little later in the game, and the window is larger. Some men's second serves are over 100 mph, while their first serves go up to 130 and beyond. This entertainment may seem silly and foolish, but try watching six matches a day in the hot sun, and you may just come around. If not, your brain is baked, and you need a Margarita. The committee has successfully educated small sections of stadiums one and two and thus increased may people's viewing enjoyment. The creators of this entertainment, wish to remain anonymous at this time, but wish you the best in your viewing pleasure. Margarita!

Orindawoods Junior Spring Clinic Schedule 2009

The 2009 Spring Junior Clinics begin the week of **March 16th**, and will finish up the week of **June 5th**. The 11 week program will be led by Head Pro **Patric Hermanson** and Assistant Pro **Philip Laubscher**

Class	Time	One Day / Week	Two Days/Week
LittleOnes (4-6 yrs)	Tu + Th 3:15-4 pm	\$125/\$140 (member/non OW)	\$205/\$220
Future Stars (7-10 yrs)	Tuesday 4-5:30 pm	\$245/\$270 (member/non OW)	n/a
Tennis Development Group (11-14 yrs)	Thursday 4-5:30	\$245/\$270 (member/non OW)	n/a
Tournament Training (by invitation only)	Wednesdays 4:30-6 pm	\$245/\$270 (member/non OW)	n/a

New: This Spring we are adding an additional play day on Fridays for players in the Thursday Tennis Development Group or the Wednesday, Tournament Training Group.

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 somewhat 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).

www.orindawoodstennis.com

Reservations, Club calendar, weather and court updates, lesson programs and much more!

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