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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

Fit And Hit, A Tennis Fitness Workout

Anna Marie is going to be offering a Tennis Fitness Clinic ("Fit and Hit") starting April 10th.

The class will involve rapid-fire drills on the ball machine as well as a fitness and strength component using the TRX exercise system. These classes are fun, great exercise and good for your tennis all at the same time. Summer is coming, and it is time to get in shape. Join Anna Marie for these workouts!

Class times will be 8 a.m. on Saturday mornings and 11:30 a.m. on Wednesdays for the weekday crowd. The Saturday morning clinic will run year around, while the Wednesday clinic will be offered during the school year.

The cost per class is \$15. Anna Marie will lead you through a series of drills, as well as instruct you on working out with the TRX. If you are interested, contact Anna Marie, Keith or Patric and we will get you on the list.

We're very excited about this new component to tennis at Orindawoods, and hope you take us up on the challenge of getting fit with Anna Marie!

Fighting For the T

The USTA adult season is about to begin, and that means once again, thousands of players all over the Bay Area, the state and the country, will be fighting for the right to win a rather low-quality, cheesy t-shirt proclaiming them the champions of the National USTA x.0 league.

Good luck with that. Remember that tennis is our fun, our recreation, our chance to compete, and to test ourselves on the tennis stage. Take the game as such (the word "game" is a big clue here – look it up), and gain from it what you will. I hope that each of you can strive to be the best you can be, and to have a great time, win or lose. There are no mistakes, only lessons. May you learn as much as you can. And if you win the T, I've heard in makes a good mop top, rag, or nightshirt. Enjoy!

(Note: in no way do I want to downgrade the accomplishments of winning Nationals, but winning is about the performance on that day, in that moment. That is the only trophy that is really needed. Most people end up tossing their trophies in the trash eventually anyway, but they keep the memories of how they played in big matches for a lifetime. Focus your energy on the playing, not on the winning. Winning and losing take care of themselves).

Junior Tennis

Spring Leagues

Our junior tennis players are participating in two spring leagues. The Diablo Valley League on the weekends, and Spring League on Fridays. The juniors love playing the matches and we love watching them play!

Summer Junior Program

Yes, it is already time to start thinking about summer junior tennis here at Orindawoods. Check out Page 4 for our complete summer line-up of camps and clinics. There is a class just right for your junior!

Spring After-school Clinics

Our Spring Session starts the week of March 18 and goes through the end of the school year. If you are interested in joining in this spring, contact Patric or Anna Marie. There is a space waiting for you!

Tulip Tournament

Here comes our first crack at the "annual" Spring Tulip Tournament. If you have not yet signed up for this fun, social tennis event, please don't wait another moment and sign up today by contacting Lysbeth McNeill or Keith, your tournament directors. The Tulip Tournament will be played on Sunday, April 21 from 2-5 in the afternoon. It is a way to kick off the spring/summer/fall tennis season, get everyone in that "tennis mood", and have a fun time with our friends. Please remember, this is a social event with a tennis venue, so check your bad attitudes at the gate. :-)

(Not that any of you would ever have a "bad attitude", but the point of this very casual tournament is fun, not winning it all!).

Monday Team Tennis

Yes! It is time for Monday Night Team Tennis! We will be starting the first week of May. We plan to play each Monday evening. That means that NOW is time to register for MTT. The best way to sign up is to let Keith know you want to play (orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net).

The cost will be \$50 for members, \$70 for non-members for a summer full of Monday-evening social tennis. MTT is a great way to have fun, meet other players, and have a tasty meal every Monday night without having to fire up the stove back at the ol' homestead. Join us and enjoy!

June 22nd

Ace It!

Our Ace It! Breast Cancer Awareness Day is Saturday, June 22. Registration begins this month. For more information, and to download an application, go to the Ace It! page on the Orindawoods tennis website (www.orindawoodstennis.com).

As always, Ace It! will consist of our Tour of Pros clinics with local teaching pros in the morning, the Ace It! Luncheon on the deck, and the Ace It! Tournament in the afternoon. Come join us for a great day of friendship and support in the fight against Breast Cancer.

Court Maintenance

Court Washing

We will be starting our court washing routine this month. As you have probably noticed, Mother Nature did a lousy job of washing the courts this winter. We'll have to pick up the slack starting at the end of April. Generally, we wash courts on the first and last Friday of the month around midday. We wash courts 1-3 one week, and 4-7 the next. The courts will be blocked off on the court scheduler, so if you play on midday Friday, it is a good idea to look ahead, and reserve a court, as courts will be limited at that time.

Court Resurfacing

We will be resurfacing six of the seven courts in the Club in early June. The work will take a little over a week and require closing blocks of courts (2&3, then 4-7) for a few days, reducing the number of courts we have to use for a week. There will be some nights without lights. Look for details in upcoming newsletters, as we get close.

Fence Painting

In anticipation of coloring the courts, we will also be doing some maintenance on the fences. They need paint!

Ball Machine Club / Ball Machine App

The Annual Ball Machine Club runs March to March each year. For \$100 you can have unlimited ball machine use for a year. If you hit on the machine very much, that is a great savings over the \$8/hour rate. We haven't ever raised this price, because we want to encourage people to play, to practice, and to get better. It is your tennis; make the best of it!

This year, we have added a new feature to the ball machine (iPlaymate) which allows members to control the machine with an app on their iPhone or iPad. The app is called "like my drill" and it is put out by Playmate Tennis. If you are interested in getting the app, you can get it from the App Store on your iPhone or iPad. Keith, Patric or Anna Marie can explain how it works. There are many great benefits to using the machine with this app, as it comes with many drills, and is calibrated in advance, so all you have to do is plug the machine in, go to the hitting side, and tell it what you want. No more wasting 8-10 balls trying to get settings right. You can even pick the drills you want to work on before you get to the Club, and save a list of drills to play today. Big fun, big workout. There are also many drills for more than one person, so you can share a high-paced workout with a friend.

Tennis Tip:

Up or Back?

There is often a debate in doubles strategy, should the player starting in the back come up to the net or stay back? Should the server serve and volley, should the returner chip and charge? Maybe they should come up part way?

Of course this debate leads to other, underlying questions, like what to do with the lob? Should we poach? Cover our alley? What do the pros do? Can we even play like the pros? What does my partner do? Should I conform to my partner's beliefs, or should they get on board with mine?

On my recent trip to Indian Wells, I watched quite a bit of doubles. Some teams came in, some stayed back, some played two back, and some rushed the net. Most did some of each from time to time. So we could say that tactics are situational. What is working, what is not, and go from there. And it is true, the best teams have more than one trick up their sleeves and can adapt.

But what are they adapting to? Are they attacking the problem, or playing it safe? Doing what is easy, or challenging what is hard? Of course they are attempting to find what works. What can lead to victory? And of course, deciding what works in tennis is no easy decision, because the best teams only win a little more than half the points, and yet, when they are on a roll, the vast majority of their matches.

But getting back to our original question, how does any of this help us with whether we should come up or stay back? Tough stuff. Hard to see if there is a clear-cut answer.

What I can tell you from my observations is that no matter how great the players, if they are hitting volleys in the midcourt, they are not winning very many of those points. At the SAP Open last month I got a chance to see the best doubles team of our time, Mike and Bob Bryan. Most would categorize them as the "come to the net type," which

they normally do (though not always, especially when returning). In the match I saw, at 7-7 in the third set match tie-breaker, they served, came in, were forced into a midcourt volley, which they made but weakly, and their opponent, Hewitt, hit an unreturnable forehand down the middle. That mini-break for 8-7, won the match, as Hewitt and his partner served out the match tie-breaker, 10-7.

Now the Bryan's will tell you, in their excellent doubles videos with Will Hamilton, that when they are playing their best, they hit almost no first volleys (midcourt volleys). And yet they come in a ton. How can that be?

Quote of the Month:

"There are no mistakes, only lessons."



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more!*

Well, service winners, aces and return errors help a lot. But if that is all that happens, why come in at all? Just win it with the serve, and no one serves well enough to just do that. There will be some returns. In the old days, statistics showed that if you made the first volley, you won about 2/3s of the points. Not sure that is still true in today's game of big groundstrokes, but that is and has been the focus: make that first volley.

What I found was, if I didn't win the point with my serve, and the ball came back to me as the server, and I had to hit a first volley, I was winning about a third of the points. I would miss some, I would make some that were not strong enough (like the Bryan's above) and some would be good enough and I could join my partner at the net and create a strong side-by-side force field.

So which would happen? I'd make the volley or half volley, move up and win 2/3s, or I would struggle with the first volley and only win a third? The solution seemed to be, get better at that first volley. Practice that. And so I did, and so did my students. Volley after volley, hour after hour, year after year. And yet no matter how much I practiced, and how good I got, my midcourt volley never seemed good enough when matched up against my opponent's big groundstrokes or their partner's in-close volley (poach).

So do I stay back trading big groundies with the other backcourt player? Do I hope they come in so I can exploit their first volley? What should I do as a backcourt player? In or back? "Should I stay or should I go?" (to quote the great punk band, The Clash).

That debate seems to be raging on both professional, and amateur courts all over the world. Some of the best players advocate coming up (Bryan's would say, "Don't be a Passive Pete and stay back"). Other top doubles players stay back like singles, and rely on the biggest weapons in the game: huge forehands and backhands to pummel anyone daring to venture up. What to do?

It is a tough call when we find ourselves at the back (server or returner). And yet we all want to win, and struggle to find an answer.

But if the goal is to win, perhaps what we do is actually not the key ingredient. Let's go back to that point the Bryan's played at 7-7 when they had to hit the tough first volley. Sure, they served and volleyed, and lost the point and the match, but what really happened there? The return went through the middle, the net player let it go by, and the server was forced to hit a tough volley. Oops. So the net person didn't cover the middle. It was his fault.

Sort of. Why didn't the net person cover the middle? Well, the serve did go to the returner's forehand, and the net player might have feared a shot down the alley. So the server was to blame? Or perhaps the net person gave the returner too much credit, too much respect? Sounds like both the brothers had some problems on this one point, the biggest point of the match. The net player needs to control the middle, the back player needs to allow that to happen by setting them up and defending the back part of the court.

Would they have done any better if they stayed back? A weak serve is a weak serve. An abandoned middle is still an abandoned middle. A good return through the middle past the net person puts the serving team on the defensive whether the back player comes in or is pinned in the middle.

So do I come up or stay back? Top players seem to do both. Some come up, some stay back. There are successful teams that do both. In men's, and a few women, the serve can carry a player a long ways. But everyone has to hit second serves from time to time, or hits a weak shot, or the returner hits a great return. What is the key to winning? What gives me the edge?

A net player controlling the middle in front of me much of the time. Mike Bryan said that one year when they won Wimbledon, he hit under ten first volleys in the whole tournament. Almost makes coming in or staying back a moot point. I'm sure the same is true for the teams that keep a player back. Have a strong net player in the middle to knock off easy volleys. Get free points, easy points.

So when you are in the back, your job is to set the front person up. Allow them to play close to the net by placing you serve or return, hitting overheads, covering the lob, pounding the middle, and yes, sometimes hitting good first volleys.

Teamwork wins matches. Working together to get consistently easier shots than your opponent is getting, and hitting fewer tough shots. That's what leads to playing well. Make

it easier for you, and harder for them.

The Bryan's say the team that hits the most easy volleys is almost always winning. You could also say, the team hitting the fewest tough shots (midcourt volleys, groundstrokes from the middle) most likely wins.

I'm sure that when Mike Bryan served and volleyed at Wimbledon that year, he hit some volleys and overheads later in the point. He just didn't have to hit very many tough first volleys. And that is what broke down on that crucial point in San Jose.

The goal becomes to get our net player involved. Get them close, get them near the middle. Make the other team have to work around them (make them think they have to hit tough shots, not the easy, through the middle type).

Let's not get distracted by the obvious (coming in or staying back), but focus on the subtle question, are we controlling the middle? The team that controls the middle controls the match. They get the easy volleys.

Will it always work? No, this is tennis. Nothing always works. We can set it up perfectly, then miss an easy shot. Or they rip a ridiculous winner. But controlling the middle will get us closer to being that team that wins a little more than half the points, and yet the vast majority of their matches. Good luck out there!

OWTC Summer Junior Tennis Program

June 10th – August 1st

Welcome to the 2013 Orindawoods Summer Junior Tennis Program. Our Summer Program consists of eight one-week (Monday-Thursday) camps. In addition to taking our young players' games to a new level, our four day camps 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 camps will suit the beginner, just starting out, as well as the advanced player preparing for summer and fall tournaments. Nonmembers are very welcome in all our Summer Tennis Camps classes.

Our Full Afternoon Camp is for kids 7-16. Players will be separated according to age and ability. The Full Camp will run from 12:30 to 3:45pm and consist of an Instructional Block from 12:00-2:00pm, where we will be developing the strokes, strategy and 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. Campers should bring a snack for the break. At 2:15pm will begin the Match Play Block, where the campers 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 campers 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 Camp day will finish at 3:45pm.

If you are looking for a shorter tennis experience, you can sign up for our Half Camps. 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 Camps we are also listing the Lil' ones Camp. This camp is for the 4-6 year olds, and will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4:00-4:45pm.

Orindawoods Camps	Ages	Days	Time	Cost/week Member/Non-member
<u>Full Camp</u>				
Afternoon Camp	ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	12noon-3:45pm	\$185 / \$210
<u>Half Camps</u>				
Instruction block	ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	12noon-2pm	\$120 / \$135
Match Play Block	ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	2:15-3:45pm	\$95 / \$110
Lil' Ones Camp	ages 4-6	Tuesday & Thursday	4:00-4:45pm	\$35 / \$40

Camp Schedule:

Session 1	June 10-13
Session 2	June 17-20
Session 3	June 24-27
Session 4	July 1-3*
Session 5	July 8-11
Session 6	July 15-18
Session 7	July 22-25
Session 8	July 29-Aug 1

* No class on Thursday July 4th to celebrate our Nation's B-day. We'll pro rate the price that week.