



April 2014  
Volume 20, Issue 4

# 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

## The Club Is Full

### **The Exclusive Orindawoods Tennis Club**

You are now members of the exclusive Orindawoods Tennis Club. On March 14 at about 1:45 in the afternoon, the club became full for the first time in its existence. Of course that status may change, and may have already changed by the time you read this newsletter, but still, it is quite a milestone.

For most of its history, the Club had between 75-85 associate memberships, then about 10 years ago, the number started to climb. There were some ups and downs, but with the wonderful reinvestment in the club by the owners, the great staff, the super members and lots of fun tennis, Orindawoods became known as the jewel that it is in the tennis community, and people came from all over Lamorinda and beyond to join.

We have 142 associate family members. There will be a waiting list for those who want to join in the future. I'm sure it will be a short wait, at least for now. There is always some turnover, though we hate to lose anyone. Thanks for supporting Orindawoods over the years. We love this club!

## Summer Social Tennis

### **Monday Team Tennis**

MTT starts up again on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>! So exciting. Don't miss out on the social event of the season, the decade, no doubt the century! Perhaps I've understated this a bit here.

Monday Team Tennis will play every Monday this summer for 14 weeks (skipping Memorial Day). We divide the participants into 4 or 5 teams, and play each week from 6pm to 9:30pm. There will be men's doubles, women's doubles, mixed doubles, and triples each evening. All levels are welcomed for this weekly evening social tennis event. Dinner is included.

The price is \$50 for members, \$75 for non-members for an entire summer of fun and fine eats. You will probably be asked to contribute a side dish once a month. The main dinner item is paid through the registration fee.

With sizable teams, you do not need to be in town every Monday to participate. We know people in these parts like to travel around a bit. Sign up by contacting Keith ([orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net)). MTT is a great way to spend your summer Mondays. After a long weekend, you don't have to cook, you play some tennis, you see some friends, what could be better? In fact, it's ideal! Join us.

## Defending the Lob

### **Choices and Challenges**

One of the most effective weapons in club tennis is the lob, especially in doubles (which we will talk about here today). In fact, of all the disruptive shots you can hit in tennis, the lob is probably the easiest to learn, and requires some of the most difficult skills and strategies to combat, so we see a lot of lobbing at the 2.5, 3.0, 3.5 and even 4.0 levels.

When you get to the higher skill and strategy levels, the effectiveness of the lob decreases, but it can still be an important shot. When I was recently at Indian Wells, I watched Roger and Stan (see below) use the lob repeatedly, and effectively in their doubles match against the Indo-Pac Express (Bopanna & Qureshi). The Bryan Brothers also used the lob quite effectively in their match against Isner and Querrey (two really tall guys – so there goes that excuse).

**A More Subtle Effectiveness:** At these top levels, the effectiveness of the lob is not simply measured by whether you won the point or not, but more by who won the match (see more on this below – use of lobs) through control of the crucial net area. It is a simple fact that people volley better the closer they are to the net. Mike and Bob Bryan get so

## Breast Cancer Awareness

### **Ace It! 2014**

This year's breast cancer awareness day, Ace It!, is June 7<sup>th</sup>. Don't miss it. We have scheduled Ace It! a bit earlier this year to try to include those of you who would like to participate, but start traveling as soon as summer begins.

As always, Ace It! features our Tour of the Pros in the morning, Lunch On The Deck at noon, and the Ace It! Tournament in the afternoon.

Registration is now open. You can pick up registration forms in the Club's lobby, or download an application from the Ace It! page on the Club's website ([orindawoodstennis.com](http://orindawoodstennis.com)). The various options, pricing and information is all available on the webpage.

Ace It! is a wonderful opportunity to support friends, family and others in the community in the fight against breast cancer. We are so thankful for your support throughout the years. Join us again this year, or for the very first time. All levels welcomed.

## Spring Social

### **Tulip Tournament**

**March 30, 2014**

It is not too late to sign up for our spring social, the Tulip Tournament. Contact Keith or Lysbeth if you want to play. The Tulip Tournament is a great way to reconnect with your tennis friends, meet some other members, play some social tennis, and enjoy the coming spring, and your Club!

We will play from 12-3 on Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. There is no cost for this social even.

Sign up today!

close to the net that they are almost hanging over onto the other side. Since court coverage is largely based on geometry, the closer you are to the opponent, the more court you are covering behind you. Unless they lob. Therefore, the lob is so important in tennis, not only to win points outright or to avoid the net player, but also to get the opponents to back off the net (and not be so effective with their volleys).

**Backing Up?** Since smart teams (and even some dumb teams) lob, if we are going to be successful, we better have a plan for dealing with the lob. Obviously, the simple answer here is to back up. This may work against the “dumb” team (they keep lobbing no matter where you stand), or the team whose stroke mechanics are pretty much limited to lobbing (often true in 2.5 or 3.0). If you back up and they keep lobbing, you get more overheads (can you hit one?). But against a smart team, or a more advanced team, you have actually done exactly what they wanted you to do, back off the net.

**Think Long-term:** It is always easy to go for short-term solutions (don’t want to be lobbed this point, or lose this point if they hit a good lob) than to see the big picture, and realize that you want to stay close and control the net. (“For every situation in life there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong”).

Once a smart team gets you off the net, that is the last lob you will see, and there will be tons of balls hit through the space you vacated at the net. You will have not only lost control of the net, but you are also in a more vulnerable position standing in the middle of the court (around the service line), where you will make more volley and half-volley errors, hit weaker shots when you do get the ball in, while hitting fewer winners.

So the simple solution of backing the net person off the net only works against teams that continue to lob, and who don’t realize they have moved you out of the danger zone (within six feet of the net – i.e. Bryanland, see below).

**Both Back:** Another technique that some teams use to defend the lob is to back the net player all the way back to the baseline, and play the lobbing team with two baseliners. (Note: This strategy is also often employed against a very strong net team, for very different reasons – see below in Roger/Stan). The problem with playing two back against a lobbing team is that you have given up all offense. You have no one in the attacking front third of the court, near the net, and you are just going to have to out-rally the other team. Since lobbing teams tend to rely on steady play, getting into a match that is about consistency with a team built on not making errors is often playing right into their hands. The thing we must remember here is that not all lobs (like any other shot) are good. But if you are both back, you will be unlikely to punish your opponent for their weak shots (with overheads). This essentially lets them off the hook for having to try anything dangerous at all (which they would have to do if they were trying to hit over and avoid a menacing net player).

**Cover Your Own:** Traditional serve and volley teams deal with the lob by each player covering their own side. That means that the net player has to back up to hit overheads or retrieve lobs over their head, as well as move forward when there is a volley. In order to do this effectively, the net person will have to be 1) very athletic, and 2) stand farther off the net. Being farther off the net, weakens their net position and leaves them more vulnerable to today’s big ground strokes. This is sort of the idea club-level teams are thinking of when they back the net person off the net, but they don’t move up and back as well as the pros, and just fall victim to those ground strokes towards the net person. No doubt you can hit many good to decent shots from this midcourt area, but in the long run, the percentages are against you being successful.

**One Up, One Back:** The best teams today seem to be using some version of one up / one back. Now this is subtle, because often the back player comes up (Bryans, Stan/Fed when serving), but that back person is always responsible for the lobs (for playing defense). They only come in as far as they know they can get back to cover the good lob. The net person stays very close to the net (plays offence, and smashes really bad lobs), and is primarily there to cover the center, hit volleys, control the match and flow of play. By virtue of their strong offensive position, the offensive-minded net person is basically setting up the defense, or where the back player is going to have to cover (usually defend against the fast shot cross court and the slow lob over the net person’s head). In women’s doubles, and often in men’s doubles when receiving, the back player stays back the entire point. One way the back person can come all the way into the net, is to hit a shot the opponents can’t lob. Low, short shots, or extremely powerful shots (huge serves) are hard to lob (though Bob Bryan was lobbing off Isner’s serve, and it doesn’t get much bigger than that).

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## **Reflections from Indian Wells**

### ***Roger and Stan***

**Dream Team:** The real joy of the Indian Wells Tournament and trip for me this year was watching Roger Federer and Stan Wawrinka play doubles together. In talking with other coaches and pros, there is really no doubt in our minds, that if these two really committed themselves to doubles, as well as singles, they would surpass everyone, even the Bryan’s, as the

top team in the world. Of course they don’t (lost in the semis), because their skills and efforts are focused on their singles career, but it was a real joy to watch them play. It is tempting to dream about what could be, if the top singles guys (and gals) would just play doubles, like they did back in the day of Laver, Roche, Emerson, Stole and even McEnroe. What fun!

Anyway, in watching them play, I want to focus in on four things

### ***Quote of the Month:***

“Nothing has transformed my life more than realizing that it’s a waste of time to evaluate my worthiness by weighing the reaction of the people in the stands.” – Brene Brown



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more!*

that they did very well that we could all learn from, and use in our own tennis games.

**1. Use of lobs – get ‘em off the net.** Roger and Stan lobbed more than any pro men’s doubles team I have ever seen (Bryans lob a lot too, by the way). Now if you win the point with your lob, that’s great. But that is a bonus. What you are really trying to do here is get your opponents off the net. If your opponents are not close to the net, they won’t be able to volley as well, and that makes your ground strokes better (see defending the lob above). So mixing the lobs with the ground strokes makes the best mix, leading to the best results. Note: This is especially true on the deuce side, when the server and server’s partner are right handed. Teams don’t lob as much from the ad side. There are better choices there.

**2. Two back** – When Roger and Stan were returning serve, they played both players back on the first serve. With the big serves in men’s tennis (and sometimes women’s), the server is really in control of the point. Having to hit the ball past the server’s net person when the serve is landing in the corner at 130 mph, can prove to be difficult. If you play two back, and the ball goes to the net person on the return, you are in a better defensive position than if you have the receiver’s partner playing at the service line, in mid court. In addition, Roger and Stan have great ground strokes, and no matter how well they volley, the groundstroke is going to be a more forcing shot for their opponent to deal with unless the volley is from a kill position. This is why many teams have gone to playing two back on the first serve.

Basically, you don’t want to get caught hitting the ball from the midcourt area (unless it is a sitter groundstroke or an overhead). What changed my thinking here, after years of serving and volleying, and coming in on the return is the following question: what’s the best shot I can hit in this situation (low midcourt volley vs. huge forehand or backhand)? The big groundstroke is a much more effective shot, than a midcourt volley or half volley (which ended, even when hit well, going to your opponent like a nice little under spin ball feed, as in a lesson). Teams playing two back will often have one or both players come forward when they get their opponents in a tough spot as the point develops.

**3. Poach off your partner’s return** (give up the alley). When Roger and Stan were receiving a second serve, they would play one up and one back. The receiver’s partner, standing in about the middle of the service box (not on the service line), would then signal if they were going to poach or not. They signaled poach virtually ever second serve point. The returner would hit the return, and their partner would cross. This strategy really works because it is very difficult for the server to hit the serve, come in to volley, and be able to hit the ball anywhere but cross court. The receiver’s partner would be right there to pick it off. The Bryans run this play a lot too. Especially on big, pressure points where it is even harder to make the down the line shot. The server is so vulnerable right at that moment (hitting a low volley or half volley) that it is crazy not to poach. If you don’t poach, you’ve let them make the shot, and get into the net. This play basically convinced me as a server that the best way to serve and volley was hit an ace or service winner (i.e. why come in? You were much less susceptible to the poach hitting a groundstroke b/c it’s much easier to hit the alley shot).

**4. Keep / Protect Your Confidence and Game Plan** -- You never know what is about to happen. Roger and Stan lost the second set in a tie-breaker, after winning the first set easily. So the match was to be decided by a 3<sup>rd</sup> set, match tie-break (first to 10). The first half of the match tie-break went very much like the set tie breaker in the second set. After several good points, their opponents got a mini-break to go up 5-4, with them serving, and all of us Roger and Stan fans were probably going, “oh no, it could soon be 7-4 and over.” Bopanna & Qureshi were really pumped up and looked poised to take the match. What happened next, no one expected. Roger and Stan won 6 of the next 7 points to win the tie-break 10-6 and the match. The lesson here is we never know the future, what is about to happen. Things could go very well, or very poorly. Our job is to maintain confidence, stick to our game plan, and keep playing and competing. Even if it seems like you just blew it, it is never over. From the stands or the easy chair, this thinking makes so much sense, but how often do less skilled players than Roger and Stan get down when we are broken, or make a mistake, or get behind.

A mistake, a break, a winner or even a bad line call is not what determines whether we win or lose, but more important is how we react and respond to those events. That response determines the outcome. Roger and Stan just stuck to business, kept playing, much like they did in the second set. They didn’t get too high when ahead, or too low when behind. Because none of us knows what is about to happen.

I had a very similar experience when I playing myself this past week. I lost a very long,

close set, 6-7 that lasted almost an hour and a half. The last thing I expected was what happened next, winning the second set 6-1 in about 15 minutes. You just never know, so always do your best, and believe your best. Good luck out there!

### ***More Situations and Characters***

In last month's newsletter, I described several situations and characters you have probably run into in your tennis life. I just wanted to toss out a couple more. All in fun of course. Anyone who has played has tried on most of these.

**Paint Can** – The “paint can” is when your opponent (or yourself) is “painting” the lines with their shots. i.e. hitting the lines. When someone has the “paint can” out, you are usually in trouble.

**“Price of Doing Business”** – I was teaching a lesson a couple of weeks ago, explaining to my student that when you are coving the middle in doubles, sometimes you will get passed down the line (see Roger and Stan), and that is OK, because you are going to win far more points in the middle than you lose down the line (even though they hurt the ego a bit). This student, a successful businessman, said, “Oh, I get it. Losing a few points down the alley is just the price of doing business.” The price you pay for success. Darn right. Loved that!

**Bad Moon Rising** – a lob. “I see a bad moon arising. I see trouble on the way...” – J. C. Fogerty, CCR

**A Backboard** – a pusher, a steady player, someone who never threatens us, just sits back and lets you miss.

**Ball Machine Groupie** – someone who hits great off the predictable feed of the ball machine, but not so good in a rally. They can tend to hang out on the ball machine a lot. Same can happen hanging with lessons and pros.

**Return on Investment** – hitting some low percentage shots early in the match, to open up the court later in the match. The alley shot is the best example of this, or lobbing to get a net player off the net (see above). You lose a few battles to win the war.

**Bryanland** – real close to the net, practically hanging over the net, and getting closer all the time.

Good luck on the road of tennis life. It can be frustrating, rewarding, thrilling and maddening – sometimes all at once - -but it is always tennis. Good luck!

## ***Junior Tennis Program Spring 2014***

Come join Head Pro Patric Hermanson, Associate Pro Anna Marie Gamboa and our junior tennis staff for our fun, informative and competitive Spring Junior Program. The Spring Session will start the week of March 17th and run for 11 weeks.

<b><u>Level</u></b>	<b><u>Class</u></b>	<b><u>Time(s)</u></b>	<b><u>One day/week</u></b>	<b><u>Two Days</u></b>
<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i><u>Lil' Ones</u></i></b>	<i>Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm</i>	<i>\$145*</i>	<i>\$230*</i>

The **Lil' Ones class** is for the always adorable 4-6 year olds. We will be developing the coordination and balance of these young players as well as giving them an introduction to tennis using age appropriate balls and court size.

<b><i>II</i></b>	<b><i><u>Future Stars Group</u></i></b>	<i>Tuesdays 4-5:30pm</i>	<i>\$275*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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The **Future Stars Group** is for our 7 to 10 year old players. The players will be working with 10 and under balls on 36', 60' and full courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games, and match play are all part of the curriculum as we work our way up to green dot balls and full court.

<b><i>III</i></b>	<b><i><u>Tennis Development Group</u></i></b>	<i>Thursdays 4-5:30pm</i>	<i>\$275*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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In the **Tennis Development Group** we will work on refining technique, improving footwork and developing strategic awareness for successful match play. This class is for beginning through intermediate players ages 11 thru 14.

<b><i>IV</i></b>	<b><i><u>Tournament Training Group</u></i></b>	<i>Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm</i>	<i>\$370*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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**New for 2014:** We have extended the clinic from 1 & ½ hours to 2 hours to better serve the needs of the players at this level. **The Tournament Training Group** is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.

**\*As always, Non-members should add \$25 (Lil' Ones, only \$15).**

**The 2014 Orindawoods Junior Summer Tennis Clinics information is available now on the website.  
Call or write Patric for more information ([patrictennis@yahoo.com](mailto:patrictennis@yahoo.com)).**