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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

Monday Team Tennis

Monday Night Team Tennis will conclude on July 30. Twelve weeks of summer team tennis fun will end with the crowning of the MTT champion, and the awarding of the loser's clinic prize to the team with the worst record. For the first two thirds of the season, it seemed that every cool night of the week fell to Monday. Let's hope for better weather for the closing weeks. After 9 rounds of our 12 round season, the current standings are:

Team	Captain	Ave. Wins/night
Team Four	Winnie	55.67 (of 100 possible)
Team Three	Chris	52.83 (of 100 possible)
Team Two	Lysbeth	51.00 (of 100 possible)
Team Five	Lynda / Nat	50.33 (of 100 possible)
Team One	Barbara	41.43 (of 100 possible)

As always, the food is fantastic and the weather is the weather.

Summer Junior Program Sold Out

What an amazing summer it has been for our Junior Program. Every week of the camps has sold out. Patric, Anna Marie, and our junior staff (Anastasia, George, Caitlin, Scott and Maddy) have done a fantastic job of teaching not only strokes, but the game of tennis to our junior players.

Tennis Instruction:

Power and Control

A Bit Of History. Back when I (and many of you) learned to play tennis, power and control were kind of opposites. Using the commonly taught swing model, the harder the swing, the less control you would have. With a slower swing, you could control the ball better, but would lose power. If you had incredible timing, you could perhaps swing a bit faster and maybe still have some control. With lots of practice, your timing would improve a bit, and you could hit the ball a bit harder, but never really hard. After all, in tennis, the simple truth is, to be successful, you can only hit the ball as hard as you can get it in (a high percentage).

The Problem. The problem with the swing model is that it is based on an arc around a fixed point. Sort of like planets orbiting the sun (centrifugal force held in place by gravity). There are two really obvious problems with this. One is that when you swing in an arc, the racquet strings only point towards the target at one small point for a millisecond, so you have to time it so that the hit happens right there. Hard to do since an arc is a really big motion and you start the arc far away from the ball. The second problem is the fixed point. You may have noticed, but people seldom hit the ball right to you in tennis. In tennis, you have to move around, adjust to the ball, which comes different every single time. In fact, this system doesn't even work very well in baseball, where they have to throw the ball right to you (but with differing spins and speeds).

Different Eras. As we have seen in professional tennis, the ball is going faster and faster, year after year. Watching the Borg vs. McEnroe classic Wimbledon final is almost comedy now. It looks like they are

Court Construction

As you know, it is our plan to be installing new tennis court lights in the month of August. That means that courts 2 & 3 will be closed much of the month. We have come across an unanticipated delay, but we are not sure how long that delay will be, if at all. Once we start, we will have to fit in not only lessons, but programs and league matches on the remaining five courts. When the work begins, there will be some adjustments to court scheduling, which we will announce via e-mail. When the lights are completed, we will recolor the courts.

The Refrigerator Shuffle

Orindawoods has a brand new refrigerator. This is a good time to talk about the purpose of the refrigerator. The refrigerator is to keep things cool (you probably knew that). But what things, that is the key point in this discussion: food items that you are going to use for a club party, event, league match or social gathering. The club refrigerator is not for putting stuff that you don't want to take home or feel guilty about throwing out. It is rather unfair to leave the food here, leaving us to feel guilty about throwing it out. By the way, teenagers really appreciate it if you leave booze, so please don't. Enjoy the new fridge!

Ace It!

Ace It! our breast cancer awareness day was Saturday, June 23. We raised over \$9,000 this year for the Carol Ann Read Breast Health Center at Alta Bates. Thanks so much!

Pool Scene

Hope you are enjoying the pool this summer. There have been some nice hot days when a dip in the pool sure is refreshing. We don't have a lot of rules for pool use, but they are important.

- No diving
- No running on the pool deck
- No glass in the pool area
- Children under the age of 14 need to be supervised by an adult
- Gas BBQ is for Club events only
- Please remember that this is a shared use facility, so please respect others.

playing tidily winks. Old footage of Chris Evert is almost embarrassing, as Chris has said herself. There are a lot of twelve year olds hitting the ball harder than that.

Better Equipment? So do today's players just have better timing, better equipment, perhaps they are superhuman? It is often said that the racquets are so much more powerful. There is some truth to this, but remember, you can only hit the ball in tennis as hard as you can get it in. So more powerful racquets may solve the power problem, but they don't do anything for control. Can we control the ball better with these racquets? Perhaps a bit, but again, a racquet with more control has less power, and a racquet with more power, has less control.

Dualistic Thinking. Even when we play, mentally and emotionally, we run into the same problem of power vs. control. Say it is a really important point, and we feel that we just have to get the ball in. We are totally focused on control. Or perhaps, they hit a weak lob, and we just want to crush it. Now we are completely focused on power. It seems to be one or the other in our tennis. Black and white thinking. Right from the very first ideas in our head. And it is this dualistic thinking that gets us into trouble.

Weapons. But something very different is happening at the highest level of the game today. There is both power and control. Players are hitting the ball harder than they ever have, and yet, they have incredible control. Few players have ever hit the ball as hard as Nadal, but no one has had more control. If you are making your living based on winning matches, believe me, you won't forget that in tennis, you can only hit the ball as hard as you can get it in.

But there is another principle operating here too, and that there are four weapons in tennis: time, placement, spin and deception. Placement is basically control. Time has an element of power in it. They have less time if the ball is going faster. Spin can help with control, and it also helps with power (the heavy ball jumps at you on the bounce). Deception is that your shots all look the same, but with placement, spin and power, you can hit them to different places in the court without giving your intention away until it is too late. So deception impacts how much time they have to react as well and so in some sense, has a great deal to do with power (certainly with time).

The strongest player is the one who can combine these four weapons best, like a cocktail with the proper blend tastes the best. Too much of one ingredient, too little of another, and you could find yourself retching and spitting it all out.

Rally Speed. This leads to the idea of rally speed. Every player has a rally speed. Rally speed is the speed at which you can hit the ball and keep it (90% of the time, or so). It is the speed at which you can control the ball, place it where you want, put some spin on it, and maybe even be a bit deceptive if you are a good player. The player with the higher rally speed, is basically the better player. Just like the racecar driver who can keep the car on the track at the highest speed is the best driver. When I was at Indian Wells watching the players practice, moving from court to court, you could see that Nadal, Federer, Djokovic and Murray all hit the ball consistently harder than the rest of the guys. There were players that were close, Tsonga, Ferrer, Almagro, and so on, but they were not quite at that level. In his prime, Agassi just hit the ball harder than everyone else, with control (his rally speed). Sampras served harder, and more accurately, than other players on the big points. The guy seemingly pulled aces out of his hat at the most pressure packed times, but this wasn't luck, he just had better skill. What is this better skill, that allows for both power and control (plus spin and deception)? What is different from yesteryear?

What's Different Today? The short answer is that the top players are not swinging. The swing model is flawed, and isn't going to get you there. Not any more. In your club game, if everyone else is swinging, then perhaps you can swing too, and the player with the best timing will be the best player. But if someone in the group has a better plan, a better system, then you are in trouble. And the new technique that the top players have developed, is trickling down to club players who want an edge, an advantage, who want to play like the big boys and girls. And the crazy thing is, the new model is easier. Not only easier, infinitely easier. That is why players can hit the ball harder, with more control.

The only thing really hard about learning the new game is that we have to change old habits. Can old dogs learn new tricks? But the actual strokes are simple, and easy to pull off, even under pressure (so your rally speed increases b/c you know you can get it in).

Power and Control. Contrary to the dualistic thinking found in the swing model, in the modern game, there is a consideration of power and control on every shot. In fact, there is a specific time to think about power, and then about control. And always in that order. The first part of the stroke (not a swing) is about winding up, gathering power. Loading the body, loading the arm, loading the racquet. Gathering and storing power while approaching the ball slowly in a wound position. This is the part of the swing that is about non-alignment with the ball. I wind up, the strings pointing away from the contact point, to be able to deliver force to that point when you return to that alignment.

Control is about alignment. First alignment to your primary target: the ball. Then alignment to the secondary target, the court. If power develops from turning away

Quote of the Month

"Before I studied the art, to me a punch was just a punch, and a kick was just a kick. After I studied the art, a punch was no longer a punch, a kick no longer a kick. Now that I understand the art, a punch is just a punch and a kick is just a kick" – Bruce Lee



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from the ball, and control from aligning to it, they can seem like opposites. And yet in order to hit a ball with control and power, we have to bring these two seemingly opposite ideas together.

In order to have alignment, you have to be in the right place. So footwork, which happens primarily before the contact, is the control element in the preparation. So even as we are winding up for power, we are positioning ourselves for control. We haven't forgotten control.

The Goal. So the goal of the modern stroke, and any swing for that matter, is to deliver force to a point with directional control. It is just the modern strokes do this much better than the swing model. Or just blocking or pushing the ball too.

Power first (plus footwork), then control, on every shot. This too is the opposite of how we were taught the swing model back in the day. The emphasis was always on developing control, then adding power later. The acronym I remember so well from tennis camp was CAMP (control, accuracy, movement, power, in that order). But true power, the kind of power we are seeing today, never came. This is because to have control in the swing model almost made it impossible to develop power. Now in teaching, we focus on how to generate force, then add directional control. Great force is developed, but almost immediately harnessed into control. But if people don't understand how to get force (see below), they never will get the modern stroke. In this sense, Agassi was the first modern player, as he was trained by his father to hit hard, and then worry about getting it in later. A radical, and modern approach, and tennis has never been the same since.

Spring Not Swing. In the modern game, we do this with a spring method, not a swing method. The stroke is a snap or turn onto the ball, not a swing through the ball. In fact, in purer terms, it is a quick turn onto a plane (often called a window -- thus the windshield wiper forehand) that the ball is intersecting at that moment in time. I'm hitting the plane, the ball just happens to be there. A huge clue to this being true comes from watching Roger Federer (and many other top players). When he hits the ball, he doesn't look up to see where the ball goes because in a sense, the ball or the court wasn't the target. His eyes stay focused on the target he had all the time, the plane. The plane is perpendicular to the court target, so when we snap onto that plane, we have not only great force, but also directional control. The force is always delivered, not for just force sake, but for directional sake as well.

Torque and Leverage. The wind up is loose, weak, soft and in non alignment with the ball, while at contact we transition to strong, stable, and directionally oriented (we need to hold to the target at contact, and on the follow through). The primary force in power is torque, or turning (not muscles). That comes from being very loose, flexible, weak. We wind up, gather energy, and store it for a very short, small, explosive snap onto the ball (like a spring). This is called short power (a swing is large power, which is centrifugal in nature, and very hard to control or make adjustments too -- again, think of planets orbiting the sun. There the point is to keep going around, and not make unexpected flight adjustments). The primary force in control, or holding to the target, is leverage (i.e. pushing, shoving, or using the much more attractive tennis term: driving). So the modern stroke starts with torque as the primary force and ends with leverage. Leverage is mostly from the body (legs and trunk) turning and driving forward. The transition from one to the other happens right on the plane of the ball. This is the timing of the modern stroke. Timing the change from loose to strong, right on the plane that I hit the ball in.

Conclusion. In conclusion, if an old-style swing (arcing motion) only points towards the target (ball and court) for a very brief time (it's destination is the follow through over your shoulder), the modern stroke (spring, or snap) has its destination as the plane (or where the ball is). People who swing are often going much faster on the follow through (after the hit, when it doesn't matter), than they are on the hit (with a swing it takes time to build up speed). On the modern stroke, the fastest point, and the only point that matters, is contact. The racquet does not go past alignment with the ball and the court in an arc, but holds the ball and the court by turning to leverage and a push onto the ball.

That is not to say that there is no follow-through, or dissipation of energy, but the focus and intention is contact, not follow through. The foot is off the gas, so to speak, when the racquet reaches the ball. Surprisingly, if anything, the foot is on the break. Biomechanics studies show us that the only muscles associated with the arm firing at contact are those that are trying to restrain the racquet from swinging (back muscles, bicep, etc...), not accelerating the racquet (chest). In other words, all the work at contact is trying to get the racquet to, in a sense, stop on the plane, or in very plain terms, stop from swinging forward and through the ball (the primary aim of the swing model). At the same time, the larger muscles (legs, core) push the whole plane forward (in alignment with the intended court target). Energy is transferred to the ball in a highly efficient manner (most of the energy from the snap ends up on the ball, and doesn't spill, like with a swing), with direction (control) always in mind. The racquet does not go through the plane, but turns on it (windshield wiper). This turn adds spin, but be careful here, the goal is not to turn so much as it is to stop the forward motion of the racquet. Too much emphasis on the wiper, just like the follow through in the swing model, misses the point and the ball. The target is the ball in the plane. The windshield wiper, after all, is after contact, and therefore its primary value is that it is an indication that you stopped going forward past contact (or through the window). Power must be delivered on to the ball with directional control. No wonder the game is played today with more power, and more control, and not just one or the other like in days of old. Good luck

OWTC Fall Junior Tennis Program September 3-December 14

The 2012 Fall Junior Clinics begin the week of September 3rd, and will continue thru the week of December 10th. There are no classes the week of November 19-23rd. Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa will run the 14-week program.

The Level I and II classes will be taught using aspects of the USTA Quickstart / Ten and Under Tennis Program. Level II will also spend time using Quickstart.

Class Schedule:

Level	Class	Time (s)	One day/week	Two
I	Lil' Ones <i>The Lil' Ones 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.</i>	Tues/Thursday 3:15-4pm	\$150*	\$235*
II	Future Stars Group <i>The Future Stars Group is for our 7 to 10 year old players. The players will be working with Quickstart balls on 36" and 60" courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games, and match play are all part of the curriculum.</i>	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm	\$300*	n/a
III	10s Development Group <i>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 through 14.</i>	Thursdays 4-5:30pm	\$300*	n/a
IV	Tournament Training <i>The Tournament Training Group is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.</i>	Wednesdays 4:30-6pm	\$300*	n/a

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

We have factored into the cost of the clinics, the potential of two weeks of missed classes due to rain, illness, vacations, etc...

Special Discount: 10% discount off the cost of the 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 update.

Tennis Shoes Required (no black soled shoes that mark the court).

For more information or to sign up, please check the club website, or call Keith or Patric at the Pro Shop (925-254-1065) or you can also e-mail Patric at patrictennis@yahoo.com.

