



December 2012
Volume 18, Issue 12

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

Happy Holidays / A Great Year At Orindawoods

Hard to believe that it is already December and the holidays are upon us. We hope you and your family have a great holiday season.

As for all of us we've had a great year here at Orindawoods. Membership has been high (so we all have lots of people to play with), there has been tons of great tennis played, and from all reports, people are enjoying the Club. Team tennis was great again this year, and continues in an informal format every Monday night. In 2012, we installed new court lights, and we have scheduled court recoloring for 2013. The locker rooms were upgraded, and out on the court, the junior program and lessons have been in full swing.

We are all blessed to have such a wonderful club, and to have you as members and homeowners. Thanks, and have a great holiday season!

--Keith, Patric, Anna Marie, George

Patric On The Mend

As many of you know, Head Pro Patric Hermanson had appendicitis last month. He is well on the road to recovery and appreciates the many well wishes he received from the members. Patric is scheduled to be back to work the week of November 26 in a somewhat limited capacity. We miss Patric, and look forward to his return.

Orindawoods Junior Championships

Last month the club hosted the Orindawoods Junior Championships. Several kids from our junior program participated, as well as juniors from all over the county. From our group of juniors we are happy to report that Nico Haet won the Boys 12 and under division. Jonathan Zhou was a finalist in the Boys 14s. And Katie Reeves won the consolation division in the Girls 12s. Dana Zhu, another member of our junior program, was a semi-finalist in the Girls 14s. All in all, over 70 kids participated in this fun event. Thanks to all the members for supporting the tournament, and allowing us to use all the courts for the weekend.

Tennis Tip:

A Turn of the Ball

Recently I watched a video clip of Roger Federer hitting a forehand (we'll discuss the forehand here, but basic ideas discussed here apply to all modern strokes). The camera shot was taken from behind in slow motion. There it was, clear as day. From this view, it struck me like a lighting bolt. Federer was not swinging forward, as most people believe is the direction of a tennis stroke. He wound up his body, arm and racquet so that everything was coiled close to his body. Then he moved his racquet out to the right, and then brought it back across his body to the left. The change of direction from right to left happened precisely at the time the ball arrived on his strings. His racquet stopped going out to the side at that time, and rotated back and up to the left side of his body. The ball was fired forward, with great force, but the path of the racquet was primarily perpendicular to the flight of the ball.

Perpendicular

The tennis stroke, as executed by the best players in the world, is a stroke that is predominantly perpendicular to the flight of the ball, not a head-on

Men's and Women's Clinics

The Men's clinic will resume on Thursday November 29 with Patric's return. The Ladies' clinic has been ongoing with Anna Marie filling in. Patric will be back for the Ladies' clinic on November 27th.

The Holidays

The Pro Shop will be closed on December 24-25 and December 31 and January 1 for the holidays. Otherwise, we'll be around. Junior program ends on December 13th.

Give the Gift of Tennis

Have a tennis enthusiast in your family? We have gift certificates for lessons, stringing, racquets, etc... for the holidays. Just contact us, and we'll set you up with one of the best gifts your tennis enthusiast can receive.

Upcoming League Tennis:

USTA Forty-plus Tennis

The new USTA 40+ season is coming up, and we are looking to form teams in several divisions, if there is interest. The format is one singles and two doubles, so you only need five players to play a match. It only takes about twelve or so players to have a team. There has been talk of having teams at several levels, but as of now, we only have a couple of captains in place. If you or your group is interested in having a team, please talk to Keith and we can get one set up. The season runs January, February and March.

The Mixed 55 and over season is coming up as well, if there is interest. The regular Adult season quickly follows (team registration starting in February, season runs April-July).

Leagues are a great way to play different people, test your skills in action, and improve your mental game through the crucible of pressure.

collision with that ball, where the racquet and the ball are going in opposite directions. Of course, most non-professional players feel that we have to swing forward towards the ball to propel it over the net. While there is an element of truth to this, it is not the whole story, or even the main ingredient of the modern stroke. And this perpendicular stroke exists for one very simple reason: we don't just strike the ball in tennis, we have to aim the ball.

It's the Elbow, and, It's Not The Elbow

Everyone who plays the game really well in our sport today uses this modern stroke. So how do I create the perpendicular swing?

The first move is to change our orientation to the ball. We all start in a ready position, facing our opponent on the other side of the net (we are not sure whether they will hit us a forehand or backhand). Once we see a forehand coming, we need to reorient our body so that we can stroke the ball in such a way that the racquet face will be perpendicular to the flight of the ball. So we turn 90 degrees to face the side fence. We also need to adjust our grip so that it too is best set to meet the ball out to our side. (There could be a large discussion of grips here that we will leave for another time, but let's just say that the grips are moving much more towards semi-Western or even Western with this more sideways swing b/c that interfaces with the ball much better on this swing path than continental or even eastern forehand grips).

After turning sideways and making the grip change, the first move is to raise your arms up in front of you, making a circle (two arms and the racquet form a circle in front of you at shoulder height). Your elbows are lifted up away from your body. Next you slot your right elbow down and in, so that it slides forward in front of your body (this motion causes the racquet to point down and back). To achieve this position, you must externally rotate your shoulder. We call this position the slot, where the racquet has dropped and folded to the inside of the flight path of the ball. In this position, it feels like you are going to hit the ball into the side fence (and you feel a lot like a pretzel, all coiled up).

In reality, this slot position is the start of the stroke. Everything up to this point has been windup (coiling to store energy). From this position you push your elbow out towards the ball (sort of like an underhand tossing or shoving motion – your elbow is pointed down). It still should feel like you are going to hit the ball into the side fence (stay on the inside of the ball). As you reach the ball, you lift your elbow out to the side and rotate your arm. Your elbow will continue going out to the right towards the fence, but this motion will cause your racquet to rotate around to your left side in a windshield wiper motion. Your racquet will travel in a plane that is in front of your body, from right to left. This plane is perpendicular to the flight of the ball, allowing you to aim your shot back to your opponent's court. Your right elbow will finish about shoulder height, on its side, still out to your right. Catch the racquet head with your left hand, near or over your left shoulder. The racquet should be moving slow at this point (more on this below) and therefore easy to catch. Your body has rotated somewhat forward, but still has a sideways orientation (eyes/head still on contact).

So far, there is all this talk about the elbow. The elbow does this, or the elbow does that, but in reality, the elbow is just a marker for the rotation of your arm in your shoulder joint. It is shoulder rotation that is actually driving the stroke, not your elbow. There is external rotation, there is internal rotation, there is lifting of the arm, but the one thing there is not much of, is swinging the arm (the one thing that most people think is what is happening). So the elbow changes positions, but is largely passive (this is why pros don't get tennis elbow).

Magic, Power, and Why The Pros Are So Good

Why can the pros hit the ball so hard, when with basically the same bodies (two arms, two legs, core, even basically the same size), we can't generate anywhere near that kind of force and power? It is like the pros are using magic, or something. And to add insult to injury, it doesn't even look like they are trying all that hard, they just whip the ball back like it was no problem at all.

We hear talk all the time on TV about racquet head speed. So we go out and try to create speed by just swinging

harder, and not only do our shots not go very fast (because we miss hit), but they fly all over the place with a complete loss of control. Miss-hits abound, fences are assaulted with out-of-control shots, and racquets are thrown in frustration.

Well racquet head speed is the correct answer, but not in the way that we envision it to be. We think it is forward speed, when in actual fact, much of the speed is from a turn.

Consider this, if I point my racquet towards the back fence, and then swing it around to the front fence, 180 degrees, I can probably do that in about a half a second. Seems pretty fast, huh? (of course racquet face is only pointing towards my target for one instant on that entire swing path -- precisely at 90 degrees -- so that is a big problem, but let's just keep the discussion to speed right now).

Now let's consider the shoulder joint. The arm can rotate in the shoulder joint at 6,000 degrees per second. Considering the entire range of motion of the shoulder joint is 270 degrees at best, that is pretty fast. About a 20th of a second to go the entire range of motion

Quote of the Month:

"A player who hits 10,000 balls against a hitting wall or ball machine using bad form will only get good at being bad."

-- David W. Smith



Orindawoods Tennis Club

650 Orindawoods Dr
Orinda, CA 94563
USA

Phone:

925-254-1065

Fax:

925-254-1380

Website:

www.orindawoodstennis.com

Executive Tennis Director:

Keith Wheeler
[orindawoodstc@
sbglobal.net](mailto:orindawoodstc@sbglobal.net)

Head Pro:

Patric Hermanson
PatricTennis@yahoo.com

Associate Pro:

Anna Marie Gamboa
gamboa.tennis@yahoo.com

Junior Tennis Staff:

Caitlin Powell
George Kaiser

Weekend Staff:

George Kaiser

Newsletter Editor:

Keith Wheeler

Associate Editors:

Patric Hermanson
Marcy Sharafian

**www.
orindawoodstennis
.com**

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

of the shoulder. Or, about 10 times faster than your half-second swing from back to front. That's the magic.

Catch the ball on the strings at the precise moment you switch from moving out to the right to back to the left, by lifting and rotating your elbow (internal shoulder rotation) and you will have tremendous force. The racquet will turn on the ball, the racquet will turn the ball. This is torque, the true source of pro power. But not only that, the racquet will be perpendicular to the flight of the ball (you can aim), and your racquet will be arching up, producing a lot of topspin for control as well. Not just a win-win, but a win-win-win.

It's a Turn, Not a Swing

But I've heard people claim, "I feel a lot of power when I swing forward? Why can't I swing the racquet?"

When you swing a racquet, basically you throw it. The racquet picks up speed as it goes along, and it travels with great momentum. The weight of the racquet pulls on your arm and it feels so powerful. It will be going the fastest near the end of its flight. But hold on, we don't want the racquet going the fastest on the follow through, after we hit the ball, we want it to be fastest when we meet the ball, in the middle of the swing.

Well, if we turn the ball, rather than swing at the ball, or hit the ball, the fastest point on the swing is precisely at contact. Right where we want it. So again, I recommend catching the racquet on the follow through. Force yourself to slow down at the end. This insures that the speed is in the middle, where I want it, and not at the end, where it is more than useless.

And of course the biggest reason why swinging doesn't work very well is that swinging makes it very hard to aim. I need the angle of the racquet to be perpendicular to the flight of the ball at contact. With the "windshield wiper" stroke we have described here (and the pros are using), this perpendicular relationship exists for almost all of the stroke, while when we swing from back to forward, it only exists for the briefest of moments.

And Then There Was Timing

Club players are always talking about timing the shot, and how they miss-timed a shot as the reason for missing. With a swing, the only way to make sure you hit the ball and to increase the time the racquet is perpendicular to the ball flight is to slow down, or not swing, just block it. The problem is, there goes your power. But with a modern stroke, power and control go together, and are not opposites (and as a bonus, you also get more spin too as the racquet rotates up and turns the ball).

With the modern stroke, the speed comes purely from the turn. You can go from zero to full speed immediately (just lift and rotate your elbow). So I can start right next to the ball (remember, approach the ball slowly, like you are going to bunt it into the side fence), and then just turn. It is very hard to miss-time the shot, because you start practically right on the ball, when the ball gets there, rather than having to build up speed from way back, like a swing. So I don't want a backswing, because I don't want to swing forward. Instead I want to wind up, coil and catch the ball with the strings.

Winter Tennis At Orindawoods

Denial no longer works. We have all been forced to admit that it is winter here at Orindawoods. But tennis enthusiasts don't lose hope. And do not fret, nor lock your racquet away in the closet for the season. Many of the very best days for playing tennis are right here in the winter, tucked in between this storm and that. A clear winter day often offers the very best weather, no wind, not too hot, brilliant skies, not too bright. I have been teaching tennis during the winter for thirty years now, and I get rained out about 30% of the time, and teach the rest of my lessons. Some winters are wetter than others, but on the whole, here in beautiful California, there is plenty of time for tennis.

There are a couple of things to remember about tennis in the wintertime, however. First of all, the sun is much lower in the sky, so be prepared with a hat or visor in your bag. You are going to need it, especially in the afternoons here at Orindawoods. And for the same reason, don't pack away those sunglasses just yet. In the mornings and

evenings it can be a bit cool, so wear layers. As you warm up, you are going to want to take some of them off, but not all. And here is a very helpful tip, put the clothes you've shed on top of your bag or purse, so you don't leave them here. Tracking down your favorite warm-up two weeks later can be a real pain, as well as leave you cold.

A good warm up is important in the winter. Create a little heat in the body, jog around a bit, before you try to play and run full speed. Muscles and limbs warm up more slowly in the cool conditions. Don't forget to drink water. You are still exercising, and just because you are not sweating like you do in the summer, doesn't mean that your body doesn't need fluids.

The bounce of the ball is much different in the winter than in the summer. Hold on, the balls are not flat, they are just going to bounce less when the temperatures are cooler. It is a good idea to plan to stand in a step or two closer, and be ready to move forward. Shots that stay low are much more effective in the winter, like volleys and drop shots. The power shots, by comparison, are not as effective as in the hot summer months when the ball is booming. You may have to do a bit more than just serve, and so expect the points to be longer, and played lower. Serve and volley and chip and charge can be more effective in the winter with the lower bounces and the slower balls. Have a good time, enjoy winter tennis, and we'll see you out on the courts before spring!

OWTC Winter Junior Tennis Program *Tentatively starting January 6th*

The 2013 Winter Junior Clinics will begin the week of January 6th. Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa will run the winter program. The exact price, length of program and dates have not yet been determined due to Patric's illness the past three weeks, but we will be starting in early January. The basic schedule, listed below, will remain the same. Please check with us for the exact dates and prices later in December.

The Level I and II classes will be taught using aspects of the USTA Quickstart / Ten and Under Tennis Program. Level III 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	Price TBD	TBD
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	Price TBD	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	Price TBD	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	Price TBD	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.

