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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

Happy Holidays

All of us here at Orindawoods would like to wish all of our members and residents a happy and safe holiday season!

2010, A Great Year

We had a great year at Orindawoods Tennis Club this past 12 months. Thanks to all of you for being a part of a great 2010.

Besides many great hours of tennis, we did major repairs to court one, had another great Monday Team Tennis season, competed in more leagues than ever and maintained a healthy-size membership throughout the year. This is no mean feat in the current economy, but we have made a commitment to keeping Orindawoods as nice a club as possible for our members.

We were joined this fall by our newest staff member, Associate Pro Anna Marie Gamboa. It has been great to have Anna Marie here, and if you haven't had a lesson yet from Anna Marie, take one. She possesses great enthusiasm for the game.

Junior tennis has been fantastic at the Club this year. Patric, and his assistants, first Brad and now Anna Marie have done an amazing job with our junior players. Our revamped summer program was very successful, and as I mentioned last month, this is the best time in the history of tennis for kids to learn the game. With QuickStart Tennis, featuring smaller courts, scaled down nets, lower bouncing, slower balls, and smaller racquets, the game finally fits the size of our littler members and players. The progress we are seeing on the 6-10 year-old age group is amazing compared to when they were using mostly full-size equipment before.

With the holidays coming up, we are thankful for every one of you who make up our greater Orindawoods family. We hope that you have a happy and safe holiday season.

Can't Get a Reservation?

Remember that we have two drop-in courts at the Club available almost every day, all day long. Courts 4 & 5 are drop-in courts (can't be reserved). This drop-in gives people the flexibility to play w/o a week's notice, like most reservation courts require at the busy times. The drop-in courts are often underutilized, even on the busiest of days. So don't feel that you are shut out, just because you didn't get a reservation.

Exceptions to drop-in courts being available are when we have a home league match (often Mondays and Fridays at 9 a.m.—but certainly not every week), and court 5 is used for lessons on Tuesday morning (but court 4 is available for drop-in). There are no drop-in courts in the afternoons during our junior program.

It is interesting to note here that many clubs do not even have reservation courts. Sleepy Hollow and Berkeley Tennis Club for example, have only drop-in courts. Other Clubs, like Orinda Country Club, start all their reservations at one time, on Monday morning for the whole week. A phone log-jam.

It is great to have our reservation system on-line, with many

Dues For 2011

Club dues for 2011 will be \$102. We will continue to provide excellence at the lowest possible price.

If you have an automatic deposit from your bank be sure to adjust the amount for the January payment so you don't have to deal with late fees and all that hassle. Thanks.

Reindeer Games

On Sunday, December 12, we will hold our annual Reindeer Games (Rainout Games) here at Orindawoods from 12 – 4 p.m.. This holiday tennis social has been a big hit (on years that it doesn't rain). There is no charge to play, but we may ask you to bring some holiday goodies at the time. To register or get more information, please sign-up on the Club's website (click on the event on the Club Calendar) or contact Keith at the Club, or Lysbeth McNeill. Over 20 people have already registered!

Holiday Schedule

Can you believe it, the Holidays are upon us! Here are some important dates as we come into the holiday season.

November 25-28 the pro shop will be closed for the Thanksgiving weekend.

December 12, Sunday, is our annual Reindeer Games tennis social. Sign up on the website, or with Keith or Lysbeth (see above).

December 24-25 the Pro Shop will be closed for the Christmas holiday.

December 31, Jan 1 the Pro Shop will be closed for New Years' holiday.

Winter Junior Program

We have had a fantastic junior program in 2010, with our biggest summer and fall programs yet. So many kids are participating. Patric, Anna Marie and our junior staff look to keep that momentum going this winter and spring 2011. Check out the Winter Junior Program on page 4!

League and Court Schedule

With the winter upon us (drip, drip, drip), the weather can play havoc with our tennis plans. The same goes for league play here at the club, and the rescheduling of matches. However, we keep an up-to-date schedule on the Club Calendar on the website. This is important for non-league players as well as league players, as the league matches take 3 courts.

times that you can reserve, and not have to wait to get through on the phone, or not know for sure you are going to get a court. But if you don't get a court by reservation, all is not lost. Come on down, you could get on courts 4 or 5.

Nighttime: For those of you who are looking to play after dark (in the winter), reservations are usually required. However, while reservations at 6 or 6:30 on weekdays can be hard to get, there are often courts available after 7:30.

In the dead of winter (late November to early February), the lesson program uses the lighted courts until 6 p.m.. Then those courts become open for member reservations.

Rain or Shine?

If you are not sure about the court conditions, check out the Court Cam on the Orindawoods Tennis Club website (www.orindawoodstennis.com). This is a great way to see if the courts are dry, or if other people are playing. The staff also posts a weather report on the home page each day (often several times a day), updating the conditions (palm trees waving in the cool, 70 degree tropical breeze every day). OK, part of that might be a stretch, but we do have daily weather reports.

An Orindawoods Flavor At Miramonte

A large part of the league-winning, very successful Miramonte Girls' Tennis Team had a strong Orindawoods component this fall. Head Coach Michael McCollom is a well-known member of the Club (past president of the Orindawoods Association as well). Number one singles player Anya Kaiser and number four singles player Tamar McCollom have played and learned their tennis here. Several younger girls from the junior program are on the JV team, and there are three other varsity players that have played here and taken lessons here in the past. Dani Vignos would also have been on the varsity team, if she had not suffered a poorly-timed broken arm right as the season was to begin.

After winning the league, Anya Kaiser and her partner Hana Anderson won the DFAL doubles championship and competed in the NCS tournament. Tamar McCollom had a very good showing in the DFAL singles competition. After DFAL, Miramonte went on to North Coast Section where they went all the way to the semi-finals before being stopped by Redwood HS in the quest for NCS glory. It is interesting to note that while Miramonte is a medium size school, in girls' tennis they compete in the large school Division I. So these girls are battling with the top of the tops. Congratulations to all!

Noise Pollution

Yes, Highway 24 can be loud at times, as can leaf blowers. And there is always our beloved buzzing court lights, but these more constant little annoyances can be blocked out by the wonders of the human brain (unless, of course, you are losing and need an excuse). More difficult noise pollution to handle is intermittent and unpredictable loud talking on an adjacent court. We realize that this happens with lessons, and we try to arrange our lessons so that we are not disturbing your game. Obviously, if you play on court 3, there is a very good chance you will be next to a lesson. A couple of other times of the week we do have to spread out onto other courts. We are sorry. However, if you have done your best to avoid loud voices, and then the person on the next court is talking loudly across the net to their hitting partner, this can be disruptive. So we ask that you please remember that others are playing, and to please keep it down. Because our gazebos are located between two courts, a conference between four players about the latest gossip of the week can be disruptive to the adjacent court as well, so please think of the people around you before you shout out your enthusiasm about the latest movie release. If someone next door is loud, please just ask him or her to tone it down a bit. After all, you are trying not to think, and you can do without any restaurant suggestions. Or tennis tips either, for that matter.

Orindawoods Junior Championships Wrap Up

Orindawoods hosted the OW Jr. Championships on November 12-14. Keith and Patric oversaw this great event for our up and coming players in Contra Costa County and beyond. This year we had sixty participants playing in age groups 10, 12, 14 & 16. Several members of our junior program participated. A great introductory experience.

Winter Tennis

Here we are, back into winter tennis (how did this happen?). Winter tennis is different than summer tennis. The first thing is that the balls just don't bounce as well in the winter. The air is heavier, there can be dampness, and cooler temperatures. Cooler temperatures have a huge impact, as a significant cause of air pressure is temperature. In other words, air pressure goes down when it is cooler, up when it is hotter. Remember that we are playing with

pressurized balls, so even new balls are going to bounce lower on cooler days, and higher on hotter days.

So in winter tennis, the average ball bounce is going to be lower. You are going to have to bend your knees more, and it is going to be much harder to over power your opponent. Playing shots that stay low, like volleys

Quote of the Month:

"These are not books, lumps of lifeless paper, but
minds alive on the shelves."
--Gilbert Higher, writer



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and approach shots are going to be more effective. Drop shots die better, lobs stay in and don't sail. You can hit harder, and the ball won't go as fast, therefore consistency becomes more likely, and important. The huge, unreturnable serves of the summer, can be returned now with the ball going slower and bouncing lower in your strike zone rather than up by your shoulders. You can stand in closer, anticipating, slower, lower, perhaps shorter shots. On the other hand, it gets darker much sooner, and if you are playing under the lights, your depth perception is worse, and it is much harder to see the ball because of that.

A clear winter day is often the best weather of the year. But on other winter days, there can be incoming and outgoing storms, and the wind that comes and goes with them. Unlike our fog-driven wind of the summer, storm driven wind can be quite strong and challenging and cold blasts of air come more from the south. Our fog driven wind in the summer is more from the west, southwest. A subtle change that we must adjust to.

Playing in the mid-afternoon at Orindawoods is a challenge because the sun becomes so low in the southwestern sky. But if you play in the morning, playing at Orindawoods is a huge advantage over most clubs with north / south facing courts, because they look directly into the sun in the morning hours when the sun is low in the southern sky. A morning match at Orindawoods in the winter has few sun concerns. A mid-afternoon match is tough, and you better have a hat or visor, and sunglasses when you are facing west. This is not nearly as bad when you play mid-afternoon in the summer.

In general, I find that in the summer, a game plan centered on power seems to work well. Faster, higher bouncing, heavier balls. Winter seems to feature more touch shots. Keep the ball low, move into position. Hard to overpower the net person on a cold day, where their low volleys make it hard for you to hit very hard shots. The bigger serves can still work pretty well under the lights.

Make sure you get a good warm up in the winter. Your muscles are tight, and need to get loose before you try to run full speed, or make quick starts and stops that are required in tennis. Keeping your warm-up suit on until you get loose is a good idea. They are called "warm ups" after all. While drinking water isn't as important, it is still important to make sure that you are hydrated. After play, put your warm-up on right away and cool down slowly.

Scheduling can be a challenge, dodging the raindrops, but I find that I get in about 70% of my lessons in the winter months, which means there is plenty of dry court time. People who are able to play a lot in the winter just keep on planning to play, and just have a day off on the days that it rains. If you sit around waiting for it to be nice, you usually miss the nice days. It gets nice, you say, "I think I'll get the racquet out." By the time you call other people and plan to play, it is two days later, and the next storm is coming in. You probably just missed two really nice days. Having lessons both in the morning and in the evening, I can tell you that there are actually very few days when the entire day is a wash. It may be wet in the morning, and dry in the afternoon, or visa versa. People always say to us pros, "you work hard in the summer, but at least you get a lot of days off in the winter", and that just isn't true. We get a lot of partial days, but there are very few washouts. That means, if you can shift around a bit when you can play (easier if you are playing singles and dealing with just the schedules of two people), then you can usually find a time to play most winter days.

Then there are the "real tennis players." Those are the folks that play in the rain, or at least the drizzle. All I can say is be careful. I have to confess that I have played in the rain, or on damp courts before, but it can be very dangerous, and I don't recommend it. How damp does a court have to be before it is not safe? If you can take a step, and see your footprint on the damp surface, then it is getting too wet to play. Another way to say that, is that there is enough water on the court that you are hydroplaning, and your shoe is actually not in contact with the court, but with a layer of water. Very slippery. Last year we even had a snow day. Point 'em down!

