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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

New Year's Resolutions, A Month In

How are you doing with those 2016 fitness resolutions? Tough to keep with the pace of daily life and find time for the desired workouts? We have several great solutions here at Orindawoods.

Hit and Fit: Every Saturday morning, Orindawoods offers a great tennis exercise class. I know many of you play tennis at least partly for the exercise, and Hit and Fit combines our favorite game, with some great TRX exercises to help you get in better shape and play even better. I remember Dr. Jack Groppe, world-renown tennis expert and fitness guru saying once, "Why walk / run on a boring treadmill or ride an exercise bike, when you can get a great interval workout playing the best game in the world?" Anna Marie leads our awesome tennis fitness class every Saturday morning from 7:30 to 9:00. Ninety minutes, a fun workout, featuring both tennis and TRX for \$20, (\$25 non-OW).

Ball Machine Club: If Fit and Hit doesn't work into your schedule, or you need more, the great drills that we do during Fit and Hit are available to use on the "Like My Drill" app available for your iPhone that can run our Ball Machine wirelessly. Keith would be happy to show you how. So another great workout opportunity is our **Ball Machine Club**. For \$110 / year, you can have unlimited ball machine use (providing the court is available, and there are some time restrictions). Numerous Club members have used the ball machine as their own private drill instructor. The result: better tennis, better health & well being (great for stress reduction). The Ball Machine Club runs March 2016 to March 2017, but if you want to sign up now as a first-time Ball Machine member, we'll throw in February as well. Talk to Keith, Patric or Anna Marie and sign up today.

Singles: Yes, tennis itself is a great workout. More so if you are playing singles, but an active doubles game can be good for you too. Just keep moving. And guess what, your score will improve, and your waistline narrows too. And as we witness everyday at the Club, tennis is something you can do most of the rest of your life. We have players hitting here at the Club that are in their 90s. Tennis is the fountain of youth.

I'm reminded of what the 100-plus-year-old woman said when asked her secret to longevity. She said, "Keep moving, no matter how much it hurts." Amen.

Squeegeeing: It's an amazing workout, and it helps dry the courts so you can play! Fortunately, this is only a seasonal exercise opportunity.

The point is, tennis is a great way to get in shape and to stay healthy, fit and active for a lifetime. And hey, it's a game. You'll hardly notice you're exercising!

Weather Watching

Ah yes, the fine art of weather watching. Are the courts dry? Will the courts be dry tomorrow? Does a 30% chance of rain mean that it is going to rain, or not? What does the resulting 30% wet court look like? What's the best weather website, app, blog?

So An Old Joke: When NASA was putting together the Mercury and the Gemini space programs in the early 60s in anticipation of ocean landings, and possible problems along the flight path of the spaceships, they set up a series of weather stations around the world. The building of these weather stations was subcontracted to the host country. In Australia, they build a wonderful, state of the art weather station out in the middle of nowhere. When the NASA official came to inspect this indestructible cinder block weather

Orindawoods Pros Attend USPTA NorCal Convention

Keith, Patric and Anna Marie will be attending the USPTA NorCal Conference held at Stanford on January 30-31. Not only do we attend this conference every year, but also go to other workshops, seminars and study on-line material.

We're excited to come back and share all that we have learned. Our commitment is to be the best, most well-trained staff we can be for Orindawoods.

The Club is not only a great place to enjoy your tennis, but a huge part of that enjoyment is getting better at the game. Seeing yourself do things you couldn't do before. It's fun to learn, and my parents used to always say, "You're never too old." Or too young.

And Babolat Too

Keith, Patric and Anna Marie will also attend the NorCal Babolat meeting on January 25th to learn all about the latest and greatest Babolat racquets, strings, shoes and tennis accessories.

Babolat is the premiere racquet company in the world, and we are proud to be on their pro staff. The Pro Shop has a full line of great Babolat racquets. Stop by, and we will be happy to show you all the racquets in the Babolat line. Demos are available. Get a Babolat, be cool player!

fortress, he was so impressed by all the latest equipment. He commented to the quite proud Australian officials, "What an amazing testament to modern science and technology." Then he paused a moment, not sure how to break the bad news. "Well, there is just one problem. You are missing the most important tool available to the modern weatherman." The Australians were dismayed. How could this be, they had spared no expense. The NASA man continued, "This building does not have a window."

As you may know, I have a crystal ball on my desk. I look in it daily in search of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. Particularly when the weather is questionable. I must say, the crystal ball has revealed all. If I look into it at just the right angle, I can see whether (weather?) it is wet outside or not. Really quite handy.

For a while there, it seemed like every Monday morning lesson was being rained out. Week after week. Finally I so frustrated that I complained in total anguish to the weather gods. The following week every single day was rained out, including Monday. Such are my powers and connections with command and control up above.

Why Winter Leagues? I was wondering not too long ago why USTA schedules a couple of its more popular leagues, 40 Plus and Mixed 40, in the winter, when it rains a lot. Then I realized, only here in NorCal, is that really an issue. Northern California is one of the few places in the United States where we test fates, and attempt to play outside in the winter. You say, "What about Southern California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, or the Carolinas?" Well, it isn't winter there. It is "summer lite". Ask any snowbird. And any farther north, everyone who is left and can't flee, plays indoors. There are some questions as to whether indoor tennis is tennis, but we'll leave that for another time.

Which Crystal Ball? So the answer to those pressing questions, which weather tool / fool do I trust? Weather Underground seems to do the best job of predicting. There is an app called Dark Sky that is quite good at telling you when to open your umbrella (it's timing is that good). Another app, Hi-Def Radar is a good radar app for your smart phone. Of course nothing beats that window, or stepping outside. Hard to make advanced plans that way, however. We can only see so far. Unless you are clairvoyant. It all comes back to that crystal ball, doesn't it?

As For Orindawoods, we have the court cam (your very own window into the present). We also post the conditions of the courts (home page) several times a day, when we are able. Of course, forecasting has been easier this winter. Just predict "rain," or "wet courts," and you have a darn good chance of being right.

And for tennis, keep making plans, and stay flexible. There are dry spells and dry courts, for the "real tennis players" who possess the determination and will power to find a way to play. Because we have to, we're obsessed with luv!

Tennis Tip:

Changing Directions: The Art of Deception

Last month (January 2016 newsletter) I talked about reading where your opponent was most likely to place their next shot, and where you (and your teammate) should stand in several key situations. This month I want to bring the action back to your side of the net, and talk a bit about how you can vary the location of where you place your shots, and thus be less predictable and more effective (even against a knowledgeable and wily opponent).

There are a couple of key principles that you must understand and master, if directional ability and directional deception are going to be a weapon for you in your tennis arsenal.

- **You need to get up next to the ball**
- **The direction the ball travels off your racquet is much more determined by the way your racquet strings face, rather than the direction you swing.**

Let's just say right now, without mastering those two points, you are going to have a very hard time controlling the ball with a high level of accuracy, or mixing up your shots effectively.

Across the Body. Last month we commented that most players hit across their body. That is, from the hitter's perspective, most right-handed forehands go to the left, and most right-handed backhands go to the right. Not only is this location true, but also balls directed across the body tend to go faster than balls hit straight ahead or inside out. The more difficult the incoming shot, the more often the across the body shot follows.

Grips are a factor too. The farther around on the grip (towards Western on the forehand) generally the easier the down the line shot is. The more towards Continental, the easier to hit cross-court. Two-handed backhands are generally easier to hit down the line than one-handed backhands. Of course there are exceptions, as stroke patterns (the way you move your arm and body) affect the ease of shot as well.

As mentioned above, no matter what grip you use, it is crucial that you get up next to the ball to have the ability to hit the ball down the line, or inside out. Because we are generally anxious as a species (I've written about this before in discussing the mental / emotional game), we tend to be early ("jump the gun") and hit the ball too far in front of us. We often don't take that last step, or extra step, that gets up properly aligned with the ball.

A real simple tip, that you can work on immediately, is figure out where you would have to be in relation to the ball to point your racquet face down the line (or even inside out) without contorting your body or wrist. That should be



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

Head Pro:

Patric Hermanson
PatricTennis@yahoo.com

Associate Pro:

Anna Marie Gamboa
gamboa.tennis@yahoo.com

Junior Tennis Staff:

Jeremy O'Neill
Katie Reaves
David Schultz

Weekend Staff:

George Kaiser

Newsletter Editor:

Keith Wheeler

Associate Editors:

Patric Hermanson

Quote of the Month:

"The ball goes back and forth, but the play is to the side."

-- Tom Stowe

your goal in positioning, even when the situation calls for a cross-court shot.

Very few players do this. They just line up for where they want to hit the ball (usually across the body), and don't realize that in doing so, they are giving away the location of their shot to a wily opponent. Plus, they are limiting their options way to early.

The stroke is the same, the direction changes. This is a difficult concept to get, but basically whether you are hitting across your body or straight, or even inside out, the stroke should be about the same. What differs is the direction that the strings of the racquet are facing. (see Fig. 1 & 2)

Contrary to popular belief, on a world-class, highly effective stroke, the hand and racquet travel more from inside (close to the body) to outside (away from the body) to the contact point than from back to forward (through the ball). (Fig. 3 & 4)

Two of the very worst instructions ever given by tennis teachers have been to "take your racquet back" and to "hit through the ball". These mistaken ideas lead to the kind of contact that makes it very hard to control the ball (a bounce as opposed to a brush).

Inside Out: Ideally, you approach the ball from the low inside, and brush across it to the high outside (Fig. 3 & 5). The resulting direction will be determined by which way the racquet string bed is facing at the time of the contact (Fig. 1 & 2). This action not only produces great power (an inside out motion moves the sweet spot towards the ball), but considerable spin (a brush, rolling the ball), which helps control the ball's flight path.

So rather than "take the racquet back," it would be better to say "wind up, and get an inside position relative to contact" (Fig. 4). And instead of saying "hit through the ball" we want to "drive up and out", rolling the ball forward (Fig. 3 & 5).

If we observe the greatest players, we can see that the racquet travels much more to the side (from it's lowest point on the wind up to it's highest point at arm extension) than it travels forward. At least twice as much to the side as forward (see fig. 4).

And of course, this method of stroking to the side (and then pulling the racquet back over our shoulder on the follow through as opposed to letting it swing forward and around) allows us to both disguise, and vary the angle of the racquet, and thus hide destination of our shot, without giving our intention away to our opponents.

Greater Range of Reasonable Options: Returning to last month's article on probably locations of a shot, if you have mastered the technique described here this month, your range that you can hit into safely will be much wider than the average player. Certain shots will still be easier (across the body), but the more difficult shots (down the line) will be more makeable than for someone with less skilled technique.

Caution is still required to not attempt to hit too many difficult shots. However, the mere threat that you can make the harder shots, makes it much more challenging for your opponent to choose to commit to covering the easy ones. If your opponent has doubt, and is hesitant to commit, your shot does not have to be nearly as strong to beat him, than if they are ready and waiting, even for your best effort. Good luck out there!

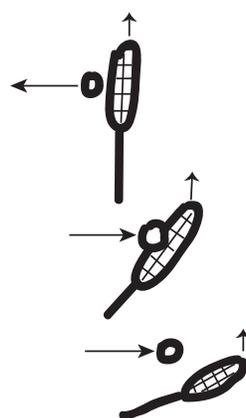
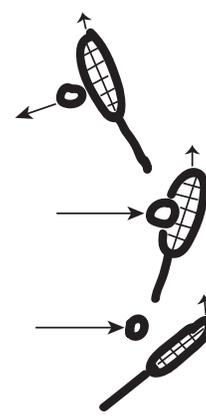


Fig. 1 Down the Line



Cross Court

Fig. 2

