



# Orindawoods Tennis News

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Orindawoods Tennis Club: 925-254-1065; www.orindawoodstennis.com

*"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it" – Celia, As You Like It, Act II, Scene IV*

## I Luv February Tennis

It's an old joke, but "Tennis is the only place where luv means nothing." Have a great month giving luv to all your opponents. 6-0, 6-0. "Thanks for playing." Oh, and happy Valentine's Day.

## Hit and Fit

Remember that there are now two Hit and Fit Classes here at the Club taught by Anna Marie. They are:

Day	Time	Price	Length
Fridays	10:30-11:30	\$15 members	1 hour
Saturdays	7:30-9 a.m	\$20 members	1.5 hours

Two great times to get fit and get in shape, hitting balls and doing a TRX workout. It's a fun way to get in shape and improve your tennis. Several participants, including me, have commented on how much doing Hit and Fit not only helps them to play better tennis, but allows them to have the fitness to play more often, with less pain.

To Register, go to the Calendar Page of the website, click on the class you want to take, and enroll. An invigorating, great workout with fun people. Exercise with friends is the best exercise!

## The Rain Daze

The Rain Daze can affect us all. It's an insidious disease, that creeps and crawls into our very spirit, drowning out the light, and water logging our soul.

Plip, plop, the rain drops  
Descending from the sky  
And I must ask why  
Why does it never stop?

The reoccurring  
Never ending  
Totally maddening  
Plip plop.

I know, I know, it's politically correct to say that the rain is good, that it's ending the drought, blah, blah, blah.... But aside from water rationing, dead lawns, short showers and other annoyances, isn't the drought why we choose to live in California? Let me rephrase, isn't good weather the reason we live in California?

I mean, really. All this rain isn't in the contract. Don't believe me? Look it up. This isn't what you signed up for. Trust me.

Some people claim to like the rain, the seasons, ... even winter. Liars.

Winter is for ski resorts. Can't think of any other good reason. Join me, keep winter where it belongs! Up there, pie in the sky. Top of the mountain. KT22. High Traverse. Lookout Mountain.

## Weather Station

Orindawoods Tennis Club has a personal weather station on Weather Underground. So you can check the weather right here at the Tennis Club. To access the weather station's info, there are links on the Home Page of orindawoodstennis.com and on the Court Cam Page as well. Or you can go to Weather Underground, type in Orinda or 94563, and the weather will pop up. If you scroll down to the bottom of the page, you can choose which weather station. Ours is listed as "tennis courts."

No longer will we have to look at the crystal ball on my desk to get the latest forecast. Though I'm not giving the crystal ball away just yet.

## PlayTennisConnect App

After a couple of months of getting the app going, the PlayTennisConnect App is up and running well again. Apple, in particular, made some changes to iOS, and that threw the app off for a bit. We are sorry for the inconvenience, but now that the app is more stable, it is a much better way to check courts, make reservations and link to important information like the court cams and weather reports.

You can get the PlayTennisConnect App for free at the App Store (for Apple), or at Google Play (for Android). You just have to download, enter your Orindawoods user name and pass word, and you are up and running. Enjoy!

## Past Newsletters

Just a reminder that past newsletters are available on line, as well as this month's edition. Go to the newsletter page on the website, and you can find that article from the past months or years that really helped you. There are tons of lessons available to spark your tennis to life.

## Quote of the Month:

*Out beyond ideas of wrong doing  
and right doing  
There is a field. I'll meet you there*

*When the soul lies down in that grass  
The world is too full to talk about  
Ideas, language, even the phrase each other  
Doesn't make sense any more -- Rumi*



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Before you get all pushed out of shape, humor me here, for just one moment. Take just one simple example, dear to our hearts. Consider this, when it rains, you can't play tennis.

Thud. Like a punch to the gut. Doubled over. Can't breathe. Damn, that hurts.

I mean, that alone, should turn us all against the rain. I miss tennis!

OK, perhaps I have overstated the case here, or been slightly misguided in placing the blame. I know, I know... in truth, it is not really the rain's fault.

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

After all, a little rain doesn't hurt anyone. There is no black cloud of fate following you around, from court to court, raining on your tennis parade, no matter how egocentric your life has become.

The enemy lies within. What hurts us is the abandonment of our souls, of our desire to get out there and play tennis. To serve big, to lob high, to volley deep, and to groundstroke our way to heaven on court seven.

Can all this glory fade into a distant memory of summers past? Of falls gone by? Of misplaced springs of hope, lost somewhere down a road no longer traveled?

In the darkness that is winter, there are often patches of light, moments of dryness, opportunities to play ... but alas, through weakness of character, our brain has been melted ("I'm melting, I'm melting...") by all this vertical water, this water fall, and we forget to look for those times to play. Those little in-between places, where our true heroes, the "real tennis players" find a way to express their inner games. Ah, alas.... to be them, to reach for glory, when all around them have given up, packed it in, gone home ... in short, failed.

But wait, it is not too late! We can go there, we can join them. We are not sheep, being herded to the slaughter. We are not victims. We do not have to succumb to the Rain Daze.

This winter, let us stand together, strong, in our fight against the evil interloper, the sloth, the laziness and the comfort of the cushy couch. In essence, let's stand against the virtual the breaking of our beloved tennis souls.

Brothers and sisters in arms, comrades, garb your squeegees and help me to vanquish the true enemy, that little, insidious puddle on a court near you.

Roll it away  
Claim the day  
For God,  
For Country  
For Tennis

Those courts will be dry in no time, and they sit, dry to the bone, waiting in anticipation for our victorious return! See you on the courts soon!

### Playing the Game:

#### A Couple of Questions For Players

When we are playing a match, wouldn't it be great if we just moved to where we were suppose to without even thinking. It all just naturally flowed, and you just trusted, read the situation and reacted. Well, this is possible, and what the elite players do. But how do they get to that point? Hint: they weren't born with it.

They learned anticipation by playing, and by consciously asking certain questions. They did that over and over again, until it all became automatic, a hunch, a feeling,

an intuition. Then they just knew, like they could see the future, have a vision or premonition, read tea leaves, etc...

This month we are going to look at a couple of key questions that you can ask yourself when playing that will help you develop this sixth sense, this knowing without knowing, that the best, most experienced players all seem to have. As Lao Tsu said, "The master does nothing, but leaves nothing undone."

When your shot goes over, ask:

**Is your shot a strong or weak shot?**

**If strong:** cover the easy to make, defensive return. Generally the middle, shots your opponent hits across their body. And, be ready to defend the lob.

**If weak:** cover the areas where winners are (often the sides, the alleys in doubles) and try to trick them to play the ball into the middle of the court.

When your opponent hits a winner or a decisive shot back, after the point ask:

**Was their shot good or lucky?**

**If good:** If someone can place the ball to the lower percentage, tougher to access areas of the court, you have a very tough choice. Do you start covering those areas, realizing that you are now giving up covering the places that are easy to hit into. You are probably giving up control of the areas you need to control to win the match. One solution here is to create the illusion you are covering the lower percentage areas (say the alley or the lob), without actually doing it. The other solution, the one employed as often as possible by the best players, is hit stronger shots to your opponents, so they can't make those difficult, good shots as often.

**If lucky:** ignore it, ignore the results. "Mildred hasn't hit a return that good in her whole lifetime of tennis. Not to mention her mother's and grandmother's lifetimes."

You don't have to tell Mildred she was lucky. That would be rude, and smell of poor sportsmanship. Praise actually works really well here. Maybe you can convince her to try such foolishness again. Lighten won't strike twice, trust me.

**The two questions interplay with each other.** If you hit weaker shots, they are more likely to be good. If you hit stronger shots, they are more likely to play defensive, and occasionally get lucky. Playing better solves most tennis problems.

**How can you tell the difference between lucky and good?** The easiest way to tell is, has the shot happened more than once? A bit subtler clue is, did they look calm, the racquet moving slow and smoothly as opposed to rushing or flipping at the ball? The latter is almost always luck, the former, much more likely to be skill. Of course it gets trickier with good players, because they look calm most of the time ("make their own luck"), but could still be getting "a bit fortunate" (shots that are unintentional). And they're not tellin'. Those little buggers.

As we have discussed in the past, certain shots are easier to hit than others (Newsletters: January 16 & December 16). Generally, shots across the body are easier for most players to hit than shots away from the body (inside out). This is especially true for most club players, who tend to swing the racquet head so that it wraps around their body, as opposed to more skilled players who push out, extending their arm, and then let the arm recoil back over the shoulder (See below, "Counter Rotation"). So if your opponent seems to be swinging the racquet head around, across their body, then shots that go the other way, inside out, tend to be more "lucky" than "good." And you can plan accordingly.

**Uncertainty.** Whether it is luck or skill, we never know where the next shot is going to go. Our job is to make educated guesses to the best of our ability, and then do our best to respond to what actually happens. You won't be right all the time, but as you practice guessing, and covering the court, the experience you are gaining will improve your judgement. Guessing becomes educated guessing, which morphs into intuition and becomes knowing.

**The goal** (the key that opens the door to tennis paradise) should to prepare each time, rather than just stand there and do nothing. The goal is not to be right all the time, because that won't happen. The "fool's gold" of tennis, and most things in life, is to think you can be perfect, or that you have to be. Let go of your errors of judgement, learn, and keep taking your well-educated guesses. That sixth sense will come with practice, acceptance and forgiveness.

**Becoming "A Natural."** Not only will your judgement improve with time, but it will also start to become more subconscious, more automatic. There will be less thought, and a whole lot more action. You will progress through the four stages of learning: from unconscious incompetence, to conscious incompetence, to conscious competence, and finally arrive at unconscious competence. And you will be oh so happy. And maybe not even remember why. A natural.

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## Counter Rotation

**Counter rotation** in tennis is when the arm and handle move out towards the ball, the tip of the racquet counter rotates back, folding back away from the ball. And down. You can achieve this move, not by forcing your wrist back, but by simply holding the racquet and wrist very loosely. When you move your arm away from your body, the wrist and racquet will naturally fold back. It is a catching motion. The racquet should fold back even more at impact, as the ball drives the racquet head back, almost stopping it in its tracks, before the force emanating from the body pushes out and drives the racquet and ball forward. This speed generated in the racquet is imperceptible if you have the proper touch or feel on the racquet. A very light touch. As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, just because you can't feel it, doesn't mean that it isn't there. The force that we want to use to propel the ball is ideally a force we can't feel. Magic. "Look ma, no hands."

**Challenging.** I know that is a very challenging concept for most of us. It's the old philosophical argument, "If a tree falls in the forest and we weren't there to see it, did it really happen?" It is part of our natural orientation to think that we are the center of the universe, and if we didn't see it, feel it, experience it, it didn't happen. It takes great wisdom and trust to realize something is there, even though we can't perceive it.

**Squaring.** The counter rotation actually helps to square the racquet perfectly to the ball as well. The conscious attempt to square the racquet often over does the process, and creates racquet head moving forward, rather than backwards relative to the hand and arm. The result is a slap, and a racquet that is not square, not aligned to the ball and the target. By trying to square, we actually move the racquet forward past square, to a position of being out of alignment. Mishits and off center hits are the result. This is especially true when we feel that we are hitting the ball out on the end of the racquet a lot. Mishits on the tip of the racquet, or the top of the string bed are almost always from too much forward movement, which causes the racquet to start back across your body too soon (essentially, you are already following through). This is why most shots go across the body as well (as discussed in "A Couple of Questions").

As above, just because we can't feel the racquet squaring (in fact, we don't think it feels like it is squaring at all), doesn't mean that it isn't coming into alignment (square) with the ball. Sorry, we're not as smart as we think we are.

**The problems** with accepting and executing counter rotation generally comes from our mistaken belief that 1) the racquet should be going forward, not backward (relative to the arm) and 2) that if we counter rotate, we'll be terribly late, and the ball will go off onto a side court. These are misperceptions of what really happens, that lead to emotional reactions that are not only not helpful, but quite harmful to playing well. In other words, we overplay. We overreact, making mistakes based on our fears. Or an anxiety about the things that we can't feel.

**Trusting** that holding the racquet loose and allowing the counter rotation to happen is essential to playing well, but takes a lot of will and calmness to allow counter rotation to happen.

This is why tennis, and most sports, or activities for that matter, have such a strong mental element to them. If we can't get into a mental / emotional space where we feel comfortable trusting the process, we are going to have a very difficult time. Being uptight and controlling blocks the natural flow, rhythm and alignment of movement we need to play at our highest level.

**In summary**, looking at both articles, the best use of your mind while playing a match is to look for tactical and strategic patterns, and to maintain focus and calmness, rather than tell your body how to play. Good luck out there!

## Winter Junior Tennis Program At Orindawoods

The 2017 Winter Junior Clinics began the week of **January 9<sup>th</sup>**, and will continue thru the week of **March 13<sup>th</sup>**. Program leaders for the 10 week session are Head Pro **Patric Hermanson** and Assistant Pro **Anna Marie Gamboa**. There is still some space available.

-“Thank You Discount” of 10% for any player continuing on from the Fall Session-

<u>Level</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>	<u>One day/week</u>	<u>Two Days</u>
<b>I</b>	<b>Lil' Ones (Ages 4-6)</b>	<b>Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm</b>	<b>\$140*</b>	<b>\$220*</b>
	The <b>Lil' Ones class</b> 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>II</b>	<b>Future Stars Group (Ages 7-10)</b>	<b>Tuesdays 4-5:30pm</b>	<b>\$255*</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	The <b>Future Stars Group</b> 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.			
<b>III</b>	<b>Tennis Development Group (Ages 11-14)</b>	<b>Thursdays 4-5:30pm</b>	<b>\$255*</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	In the <b>Tennis Development Group</b> we will work on refining technique, improving footwork and developing strategic awareness for successful match play. This class is for beginning through intermediate players			
<b>IV</b>	<b>Tournament Training Group</b>	<b>Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm</b>	<b>\$325*</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	The <b>Tournament Training Group</b> is an <u>invitation only</u> class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out. Players already in the program will be promoted when they are ready.			

**\*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.

Sibling Discount: 10% discount off the cost of 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 condition update.

**Tennis shoes required (no black soled shoes). Cell phone use during class time is limited to emergencies or with pro consent.**

For more information or to sign up, please check out the club website, call Keith or Patric at the Pro Shop, or you can also e-mail Patric at patric.owtc@yahoo.com.

**The Spring Junior Program will follow the same format, starting the week of March 20.**