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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

The Concept of the Impossible Shot

There are shots hit to you in tennis that can't be made. Perhaps the ball is going too fast, or is too well placed, has too much spin, or perhaps you were tricked by their deception. An outright winner or forced error is the result. You lose the point.

Impossible Shots: How you respond to these "impossible shots" is going to have a huge effect on your ability to perform throughout the rest of the match.

I love what former Orindawoods Pro Judy Newman says, "One point is not that important. A lucky shot, a bad line call or a horrible miss is not going to beat you if you treat it as a single point. If you overreact and let it ruin your game, it very well can beat you."

In the classic Tom Cruise movie *Risky Business*, Joel is told by his close friend Miles, "Sometimes you have to say, what the f----. What the f---- gives you freedom. Freedom brings opportunity, opportunity makes your future." Basically, letting go of trying to control the outcome and going for it.

So what is your best strategy for winning? Doing your best to hold to your form, while accepting that some shots are not possible. That is your best tactic for long-term results.

Altering your stroke, to try to salvage a point you were unlikely to win anyway seems like a good idea (I should try to win every point), but is actually a recipe for long-term disaster.

Once you are willing to let go of your structure and form on one point, you will be willing to do it on others. Without structure and form, you are lost in tennis. In fact, creativity in tennis, just like jazz, comes out of structure and form. You have to know how to play, before you can play (around).

Not to mention, occasionally a ball comes that looks impossible, but we take our best shot at it anyway with good form, and lo and behold, we make the shot. Our best chance is to act like no shot is too tough, within the confines of sticking to our stroke.

Rattled? The best players in any sport don't get rattled. They stay on task, no matter how strong the pass rush, how bad the pitching count, how close the game is when they have a free throw, how late in the final set the match has gone. I remember watching Steffi Graf play against Monica Seles at Wimbledon one year. It was 8-7 the third set (no tie-breaker in the final set), and Seles was serving for the match. The score was deuce, and Seles served to Graf what looked like a relatively easy second serve. Graf lined up to hit the ball, and the ball hit a clump of grass, took an impossible bounce, and Graf whiffed the ball completely. It is hard to imagine a bigger point than that, and Graf just walked over to the other side of the court for the ad point, like nothing had happened. She was ready go for match point against her. Normal people would have gone crazy at their misfortune. I went crazy as a Graf fan watching on TV 8,000 miles away. But great competitors are not normal. And you have to learn to be less normal too when playing.

Tennis is about finishing the match well. The team that finishes the match wins. You can't get ahead and just run out the clock. You have to play better than the other team, and win that last few games and points.

February: The Month Of Love

Welcome to February, the month of love. Be sure to spread the love this month. Beat all your opponents love and love in February.

Playing with friends? Not a serious match? I always liked what Jack Kramer said. "You owe your opponents and friends your best game. Beat them 0 and 0 if you can. If they win, they will know they beat you at your best. We owe each other our best, it is the ultimate respect."

Even in the month of love.

Squeegee Holders

We have new squeegee holders on each court. This not only gives us a place to put the squeegees that looks neat and clean, but also protects the squeegees from damage. Two things hurts squeegees, long over-exposure to the sun's rays make them crack, and leaving them on the ground makes them flat on one side (and then they don't roll water off the court well). Please hang the squeegees up when you are done using them. Thank you.

USTA Leagues

We are starting to form teams for the USTA Adult season (18 years old and up), starting in April. Team registration begins January 30 and runs through February 26.

Last year we fielded Women's 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 and 4.5 teams. This year we would like to field at least one men's team, perhaps more, in addition to the women's above. We have some captains, but are looking for others.

If you are interested in playing, and don't know who to contact at your level, contact the Club and we will get you set up.

Valentine Day Flicks

Here are a couple of my romantic favorites.

Moonstruck

Notting Hill

Pretty Woman

Pride and Prejudice

Love Actually

Bull Durham

What are yours? Enjoy!

The Trouble With Trying. Proper tennis is played mostly in the core of the body. Top players attempt to get the shoulder and trunk more involved, and the hands and lower arms less. A great player's hand is barely holding onto the racquet, and the shoulders are moving a great deal. The waggle is something we let happen, rather than force to happen. While for most club players, there is little movement in the shoulder, but the arms, hands and wrists are doing all the work (those same arms usually have a tennis elbow brace on them, by the way).

Trying happens most often in the hands. And trying is the problem. We try to make up for elements missing (like footwork, positioning or timing) by using our hands. And that muscling the ball leads to misalignment and errors.

Trying can come from two sources: fear, and ambition. They are very different, perhaps on the opposite sides of the spectrum, but they lead to the same error, over-trying in the hands. The hands, and their extension, the racquet, should catch the ball. And aim the ball by pointing the racquet towards the target (and leave it there as long as possible). The body should drive the ball, and send it back over the net.

As soon as we try to save a shot by using our hands, because our body can't get there, then we are headed in a bad direction, even if once in a while, we pull off an amazing save.

Rhythm: Keep Getting Better. So the best strategy is to do what it takes to keep improving as the match goes along. The most successful goal would be to keep taking good strokes, good form, no matter what. Or as the great NorCal Teaching Legend Tom Stowe said a long time ago, "Just do it right." Even if you lose this one point by not giving into desperation.

Rhythm plays a huge part in successful tennis. Keeping your rhythm is so important. Yet the balls come to you in all different ways, fast, slow, with spin, without, close, far away. If your racquet just chases the ball however it comes, your game will be yanked around, out of your control. But if you set the tempo and the rhythm, and though you will have to adjust to the ball, don't let the ball run your stroke, and you will be much more successful.

Freedom comes from letting go. Not letting go of form, but on the contrary, letting go of having to win every single point. Let them have their winners, and their great shots. You hold to your game, your stroke, your rhythm and your tempo. Don't ever give that away. Good luck out there!

Serving Tendencies

You are playing a match against someone you have never played before. The first point, they serve to the deuce side. The ball hooks out wide to your forehand, lots of pace and spin, and you struggle with the shot, hitting the ball in the net. Second point, to your partner in the ad court, the serve hooks down the middle, and your partner scrambles to return a weak shot, which their net person volleys away. Thirty love, another serve out wide, you get behind the ball a bit better and are able to return the ball cross court. In the ensuing rally, you partner is passed down the line by the server's forehand. Forty-love. The server serves out wide to your partner's backhand for the next ad court point. Medium pace, your partner blasts a return up the middle, which the net person nets. Forty-fifteen.

Next serve coming to you. What do you know?

Well the score is forty fifteen, but I hope you have an inkling of more than that. Three of the four serves have been to the right side of the service box (two out wide in the deuce court, one down the middle in the ad). The fourth serve, to the ad court, wasn't that great, and went out wide. Not only that, but every ball the server hit hooked, except for the serve out wide in the ad court, which just kind of sat there for your partner to rip. Lucky him.

You don't know for sure that he is going to serve wide again, but that is what I would cover. He hasn't showed anything scary to the left yet. But he looks like Roger Federer to the right. Both you and your partner should consider repositioning from A to B (see Fig 1.)

Far fetched? Not really. Most players serve better to one side than the other. It may take you more than four points to figure it out, but you should be figuring out which side they serve best to, and cover that. If you haven't figured this out by the mid second set, my bet is you aren't breaking serve very much.

Your goal is to hit as many forehands as you can. So in the second diagram below (Fig. 2), notice the serve placement, and where you want to move your stance, from neutral, to covering one side. Notice that serves 1, 2 & 3 are great serves unless you know they are coming and move from position A to position B. This means that if the server can hit 4, it will probably be an ace, a winner or a very tough return. You will take that in exchange for being able to handle where the server serves well (1, 2 & 3). Three chances to win a point versus giving one up. If you can't make that deal, and stand at B, you're not going to do well in tennis. Success is knowing what to give up.

An interesting side note is this, the server should have most of their aces and successful serves to where they do not serve well (4 in this second case). That is where the returner wants to give up

Quote of the Month:

"Win the right games, lose the right games. People did this every day in their lives, in their careers and friendships and love affairs. It was the moderate virtue of compromise."

-- Michael Ondaatje, *Divisadero*



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the good shots. If someone's best consistent shot (1, 2 & 3) beats you very often, you are not in the right place.

Let's play out our initial scenario a bit more (Fig. 1). Remember, it was forty fifteen. The server sees you cheating over to the wide side (B), and hits up the middle. Long (5). Second serve. Now he has to get it in (6), the ball has a nice hook, but he can't hit the middle T consistently so it falls for your forehand in the middle of the box. You drive the ball up the middle and your partner knocks off the return. Forty-thirty. On the ad side, your partner also cheats a bit to his right (B). Now the server has a dilemma, hit out wide to the opening, or go to the t, which is his best shot. Tough call. Game point. He is smart (doesn't make the same mistake --5-- he made in the deuce side), so he goes with his best shot up the T (7), but your partner is close enough (B) to hit a good return. If he had stayed on A, the serve to 7 would have been an ace or winner. A good rally follows, and the game that looked to be an easy win for the server is now quite competitive and could go either way. He's made 6 out of 7 serves, and 5 of them have been strong serves, and you are still in the game. No way that would have happened if you remained positioned to return on A.

Say you win that point. Now the server is really stuck. Does he go for the low percentage that is open, or the high percentage, which you have covered? Tough call, lots of pressure. Under pressure, people make mistakes. Their mistakes are your path to victory and a precious service break.

What happened is you took away, or put pressure on your opponent's best shot.

Sometimes it is not as obvious which shot is best, but over a doubles match and 3-4 service games by each player, you should have a real good idea what his money ball is, and on a big point, cover that side, even if you give up an ace to the other. Some players can hit both sides, no problem. But even then, one happens either more often (for skill or strategy reasons), or is a stronger shot (or harder for you to return). Pay attention, cover what they want to do on the big points. And remember, even a player with good skill will have trouble hitting his second best shot under pressure (while it may look easy at 2-2 in the first set).

For Servers: On the flip side, when you are serving, you need to be able to hit all four serves (deuce side middle, deuce side wide, ad side middle, ad side wide -- the body serves can be a nice ad on). Do you have speed, placement, spin and deception to all four spots. Very few do. We all have favorite shots. Nothing wrong with that. But mix it up, and establish your weaker shot on the points that don't matter as much. Hopefully they won't notice your tendencies. And hopefully you are competent enough to hit the open court

Fig 1

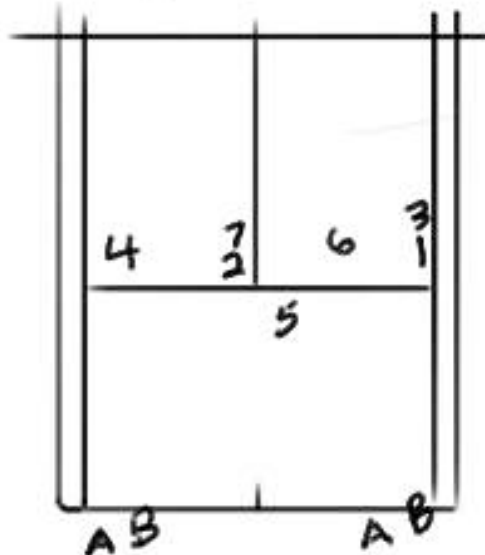
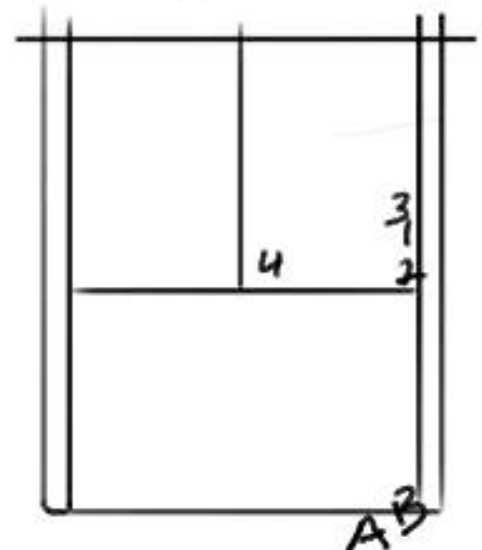


Fig 2



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

when it is presented to you. Remember, if they are cheating to one side, you don't have to hit the greatest serve in the world to the open court. Just hit the target reasonably well. So get out there and practice.

Master servers, like Sampras, Ivanisevic, Federer and Becker can hit any spot, at any time. We may not be that good, but you need to convince them that you are at least a threat in all four spots.

One of the reasons that Serena dominates the women's tour is that few servers can serve well enough to push her off the service line. She camps in close on the returns, and looks for other player's tendencies. Only a handful of players serve well enough to get her out of there. Stosur does, and guess who won the last US Open. Good luck out there!

Junior Clinic Schedule Winter 2012 **January 9th - March 16th**

The 2012 Winter Junior Clinics began the week of **January 9th**, and will continue thru the week of **March 12th**. Plenty of space is still available. The 10 week program will be run by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson** and **Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa**. 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 some time using Quickstart / Ten-and-Under Tennis.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>	<u>One day/week</u>	<u>Two Days</u>
<i>I</i>	<i><u>Lil' Ones</u></i> (Ages 4-6)	<i>Tu/Th 3:15-4pm</i>	<i>\$115*</i>	<i>\$195*</i>

*The **Lil' Ones class** 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>II</i>	<i><u>Future Stars Group</u></i> (Ages 7-10)	<i>Tuesdays 4-5:30pm</i>	<i>\$225*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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*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>III</i>	<i><u>Tennis Development</u></i> (Ages 11-14)	<i>Thursdays 4-5:30pm</i>	<i>\$225*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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*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.*

<i>IV</i>	<i><u>Tournament Training Group</u></i>	<i>Wednesdays 4:30-6pm</i>	<i>\$225*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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*The **Tournament Training Group** is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.*

*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 second siblings. 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).

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

