



January 2014
Volume 20, Issue 1

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

Looking Forward to 2014, Looking Back at 2012 and 2013

We've had another great year here at Orindawoods. This past winter was the first time we got to really enjoy the new court lights. They're fantastic. I can see so much better than before. The courts were resurfaced in June, and we added junior lines to two of the courts. We have some of the nicest courts in NorCal, let alone anywhere. The surface, the space surrounding the courts, the gazebos, the nets and all the accoutrements. This is a wonderful place to play.

The membership has grown and grown over the past ten years. Yes, at times, the club seems very active, but that means there are so many people to play with now. Our Junior Program is fantastic, and seems to sell out every session, the courts filled with our young students eager to learn. We have added Fit and Hit, an exercise program, to our already fantastic lesson offerings. While the club house and locker room will never be a palace, we have done our best to dress it up in the past couple of years to make it feel warm and inviting. All and all, Orindawoods is a wonderful place.

\$10 Guest Fees and Guest Philosophy

Guests are for the members. Let me say that one more time: guests are for the members.

Bringing guests is a privilege of membership. You have a friend, that for what ever reason is not a member of the Club, and you want to play with them from time to time. You can bring them as a guest.

What the guest privilege is not, is a cheap membership for people that don't want to support the Club but still enjoy our wonderful courts and facility. That would be a system set up for the benefit of the guest, and not for the benefit of the member (who would in turn, have to pay higher membership fees to cover the costs of people who should be members).

Now there are legitimate reasons why people choose not to be members at this time. Perhaps they are a member at another local club. Fair enough. You have them over once in awhile, you play at their place now and again, and the club industry is being supported. The infrastructure that makes our game great, and allows it to continue, is being paid for.

As for rules, we could make as many rules to govern guests as there are guests themselves. The true standard is this: does the guest benefit the Club (the owners, the members) or just the guest? All rules / policies would follow from that. As for the price increase, inflation over twenty years makes up most of that \$5 increase. But let's look deeper than that.

The Club Has Changed. When I started here almost 19 years ago, there were not many members. The guest fee was \$4. Members needed to play with guests, or they wouldn't have enough people to play with to fill out their games on a consistent basis. There were about 78 member families at that time. Now there are close to 130, not that far from double. There are plenty of people at almost every level to ask to play. Admittedly, there are a few select levels where that it is still difficult. Talk to me. I'm here to help.

Time For A Change, Time To Stay the Same: So the owners of the club have reinvested heavily in the Club and the property. Hundreds of thousands of dollars. Orindawoods looks fantastic. The Club is in great shape. Orindawoods is committed to keeping our Club nice. That stays the same. The dues are reasonable for how wonderful the Club is. Guests need

Club Fees 2014

Initiation Fee:	\$0
Reinstatement Fee:	\$300
Monthly Dues	\$114
Junior Associate Dues	\$57.00
Membership on hold	\$25/month
Pool Membership:	\$275

Guest Fees

Prime time	\$10
Non-prime time	\$10

Team Guest Fee	\$50
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Pool Guest Fees

Family	\$5
Individual	\$3

Lesson Fees

Member Drop-in Clinics	\$5
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Keith & Patric's Member Lesson Rates

½ hour	\$40
1 hour	\$70

Non-members	add \$5
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Group hour (4 people)	\$19 ea
Group hour (3 people)	\$25 ea
Group hour (2 people)	\$36 ea

Group 1.5 hours (5 people)	\$21 ea
Group 1.5 hours (4 people)	\$26 ea
Group 1.5 hours (3 people)	\$35 ea

Anna Marie's (Associate Pro) Member Lesson Rates

½ hour	\$35
1 hour	\$65

non-members	add \$5
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Group hour	\$70
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Ball Machine

Ball Machine Club (3/1-2/28)	\$110/yr
1 hour Ball Machine	\$8
½ hour Ball Machine	\$5

to respect the Club, and the wonderful facility, by paying an appropriate amount. And after twenty years, \$5 is no longer an appropriate amount. The guest fee will be \$10 for 2014. Thanks for supporting your Club.

Real Tennis Players

Yeah, yeah, anyone can play tennis in the summer when it is beautiful, or those wonderful fall days, when the Indian summer is in full bloom, a nice, calm 65 or 70 outside. But the real tennis players -- an unofficial honor bestowed to only the toughest of our compadres -- is for those who are out there when it is 30 degrees outside, or when there is smattering of rain -- but nothing can stop them. Neither rain, nor sleet nor hail can deter us from getting to the courts to play our beloved game of tennis. These are the real tennis players. You don't find real tennis players in wimpy places like New York, where they take the outdoor nets down for the winter and crawl, tail between their legs, into their warm, comfy, posh indoor courts with heaters and artificial, indirect lighting. The controlled environment of a true coward. What wimps. Or Southern California, or Florida, where the sun always shines and the snowbirds run away to hide each winter. Palm Springs... really? No, only in NorCal, where it is "barely" nice enough to play in the winter, do the real tennis players reside. So I salute you, the real tennis players of Orindawoods. You are truly crazy... about your tennis!

The New, Latest Fashions

During the recent cold snap in early to mid December I noticed that there were several companies branching out into the tennis clothing business. Northface, Arcteryx, Patagonia, Solomon, and many others. And our fashion-astute members were quick to pick up the trend and look their best out on the courts. These are the brands favored and endorsed by the "real tennis players." So what if we look like the Michelin Man. We're warm!

Coaches Needed

Both Campolindo and Miramonte High Schools are in need of Boys JV coaches this winter and spring. If you have an interest in coaching, contact Keith or Michael McCollom, Head Coach of Miramonte High School. High School tennis is such a wonderful experience for so many kids, but we need coaches to keep it going. Thanks!

Tennis Tip:

Levels of Thought

Each level of tennis player seems to have an idea, or thought that they get fixated on. It is not that these are bad ideas, and yet they limit the player, condemn them really, to playing at that level, when they could potentially go much higher if they could adjust or control their thoughts better. Here are the levels and thoughts that I have observed with each level.

- 2.0 "hit the ball / don't swing and miss"
- 2.5 Keeping score, basic positioning / where to stand
- 3.0 Is the ball in or out? keep the ball in, don't make mistakes
- 3.5 Placement, being able to direct the ball
- 4.0 Strategy: what's open, what is the opponent's weakness?
- 4.5 Strategy: positioning, anticipation
- 5.0 Hitting shots you can make, believing and acting on what you know and see
- 5.5+ Smart shots, play within yourself, stick to the process, play your game plan

Each level can think about any and all of these. In fact, to be a 5.5+, you have to have mastered all the thoughts/skills of those levels below you, but you just don't focus, fixate or get obsessed with any of them (even your "own level's obsession"). Not everyone can obtain a 5.5 USTA rating (age, flexibility, speed, strength, mental/emotional disposition and makeup can all limit our potential for actual ratings, but we can maximize our potential at the level we are at by taking on the attributes and focus of the higher levels). Some seniors, for example, have the mental game of a 5.5 (maybe they were at one time), even though they would struggle to beat a much younger 3.5 these days.

The trouble is, under pressure, players tend to think about their level of thought, or worse, a lower one. Here is the rub, your tennis will tend to rise or sink to what you are focused on. Recently I had a 4.0 group that was having a "bad day," and they were really focused on whether their shots were in or out, and even what the score was. They were thinking at a 3.0 or even a 2.5 level, and it was pretty amazing, because they play started looking like it.

These were 4.0 players, playing badly, and getting caught up in thinking that led to a level of play well below their level. Of course one reinforced the other, and the situation spiraled out of control and the tennis ended up being far below their level. That same group, has on another day

Quote of the Month:

"When I don't try to whack it, I do much better."
– Orindawoods 3.0 member having an epiphany that will lead to getting much better



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more!*

recently, been able to focus on positioning and hitting high percentage shots (4.5 and 5.0 skills) and playing up to that level of tennis.

This can happen to anyone, and does from time to time. How? There are practically as many entrances to poor thought as there are thoughts. An opponent makes a questionable line call, and suddenly you can be drawn down to 2.5 (score), 3.0 (in or out) level. Just like that.

What you think matters. Can you control your thoughts, or recover them when they get out of control? Each of us can play at so many different levels on a given day. If you are a 3.5 player, one day you can be playing like a 4.0, the next, like a 2.5. Same person, same tennis skills, different levels of thought.

Tennis Tip:

What Your Racquet Can Do

Every once in a while, I sit back, and wonder how many balls I have hit in my life. It's a big number. Very big number. I also wonder how many I have picked up. But if I reflect on that question of hitting the ball a bit more closely, I also realize that I have not hit a single ball. Not a single one. It's true, my racquet hit them all. I didn't touch a single one. The truth of both of those statements shows how much we consider the racquet as somehow part of us. Just like we think of our arm as part of us, or our feet. The racquet is just another body part. Even looking at the racquet that way, there is a division of labor. For example we run with our legs, catch and throw primarily with our arms and our hands.

What part does the racquet play in the hitting of the ball? Well, taken a bit farther, the racquet actually doesn't hit the ball either (most of the time), it is the strings. It is probably fair to consider the strings as part of the racquet, but it is a specific part, with a specific task. Different strings, different tensions, different results, even with the same racquet.

There are some very important things that your racquet does for you. And much better than you can do on your own. For example, **hitting** the ball. Not only is it not legal to hit the ball with your body in tennis, it hurts. We try to avoid hitting the ball, or more likely, having it hit us. So contacting the ball is 100% the racquets' job. Thank goodness.

What about **aiming**? Hmm... that seems more like up to us. The ball will rebound off the racquet, but which way it rebounds is determined by our skill at arranging for the ball to strike the strings, and the way those strings are pointing. Which brings us to the point that the ball may rebound off the racquet (not us), but only if we arrange for the racquet to connect with the ball. So getting the racquet into position so that it connects with the ball is up to us as well. Footwork, eye-hand coordination, timing, etc... come into play here.

So we have to move the racquet in a way that we meet the ball on the strings, and the strings are pointing (aiming) in the direction we want the ball to go. Nothing earth shattering or questionable about any of these statements so far. Pretty logical.

What about **spin and control**? The ball may come off spinning after it hits a racquet, but what form that spin takes is largely up to us and our skill to make it spin a certain way. We have discussed in these articles recently how the interaction between the ball and the strings is somewhat like velcro, or gears, and that the strings embed in the felt of the ball, and can grab onto that felt (somewhat like velcro), and with certain motions we can turn the ball, causing it to spin in a desirable way. Spin, and therefore much of control is up to us. Again, no real surprises here.

Power or force, is where the discussion gets interesting. How much does the racquet (and strings) do, and how much do you need to do? Well, let's just say, the racquet does a whole lot more for you than most people think or give it credit for. Consider this, the frame and strings make up a trampoline. How much bounce that trampoline possesses has to do with how you contact the ball (sweet spot, miss-hit or somewhere in between), what the strings are made of (how flexible or stiff), how tightly the strings are strung (tension, and how much that has stretched over time to a looser tension), and whether you contact the ball with a square, direct hit, or a brushing or cutting motion (for spin). And then again, there is the question of how fast your racquet is moving when it contacts the ball, what direction and how much the racquet weighs (in other words, force: $F=MA$).

Without going into a very complicated physics problem, that is different every time you attempt to hit a ball, let's just say that the racquet is going to do a lot of the "force work" for you. Racquets are powerful these days. We hear the commentators on TV whine about this all the time. What you need to focus on is making contact, aiming and putting spin on the ball for control. In the process of making contact, aiming and putting spin on the ball, you will either add to, or subtract from, some of the force, but the primary job of force belongs to the racquet and the power on the incoming ball. A ball approaching fast has more energy available for your use than one coming slowly.

So one of my students recently commented, "I do a lot better when I stop trying to whack the ball." There is the sign of someone who has just had an epiphany, and is on the verge of a huge improvement, if she can hold onto that idea, and put it into play in her game.

The Player's Job: I recently wrote ("Chasing Spin" November 2013 newsletter) that our primary job is, as stated above, making contact, aiming, and putting spin on the ball for control.

Of course, the more powerful the racquet (stiffer frame flexibility - generally thicker frame, springier string composition, lower string tension), the less you have to do in the way of force, and the more you have to do in the area of control. The less powerful the racquet (more frame flexibility -- thinner frame, stiffer strings, tighter string tension), the more work you have to do to produce power. But even with the most "control" racquet out there, the racquet is still doing most of what you need in terms of power.

Conundrum: How do we add power to the stroke? Going forward. How do we lose control? Going forward. Few people understand this conundrum, really. And it is at the heart of what goes wrong for most of us in tennis.

The Racquet's Job: And it is a problem that goes away if we let the racquet do it's job: power.

That is not to suggest there is no forward element in a good tennis stroke. Just a lot less than even most of the highest skilled people think. And the forward is usually combined with either an up, down or sideways movement that imparts a great deal of spin on the ball. So much so, that the movement feels much more up, down or sideways than forward. You really aren't even aware that there is any forward in your movement at all. As soon as the stroke really starts feeling forward, we are probably in a whole lot of trouble.

And we are in trouble because of too much force and not enough spin, and we are in trouble with aiming as well. It is very difficult to move your racquet forward and keep the strings facing forward (aim towards a target) at the same time for very long. Swinging racquets tend to travel in arcs.

So as my student said with a light bulb turning on over her head, stop whacking the ball. Instead focus on stroking the ball, imparting spin, placing your shot. It is a funny thing to realize, but I really want to avoid "solid" contact with the ball. I want to spin the ball instead, with an up, down, or sideways motion. How I do that, is for another day. For now, stop whacking it. I realized when I was hitting the other day (that is, my racquet was hitting the other day), that most of my problems go away when I get the conscious forward out of my stroke. Good luck!

Junior Tennis Program Winter 2014

Come join Head Pro Patric Hermanson, Associate Pro Anna Marie Gamboa and our junior tennis staff for our fun, informative and competitive Winter Junior Program. The Winter Session will start the week of January 6 and run for 10 weeks. The Winter Session will be followed by the Spring Session.

<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>	<i>Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm</i>	<i>\$135*</i>	<i>\$215*</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>	<i>Tuesdays 4-5:30pm</i>	<i>\$250*</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 10 and under balls on 36', 60' and full courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games, and match play are all part of the curriculum as we work our way up to green dot balls and full court.

<i>III</i>	<i><u>Tennis Development Group</u></i>	<i>Thursdays 4-5:30pm</i>	<i>\$250*</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 ages 11 thru 14.

<i>IV</i>	<i><u>Tournament Training Group</u></i>	<i>Wednesdays 4:30-6:30pm</i>	<i>\$340*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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New for this Winter Session: We have extended the clinic from 1 & ½ hours to 2 hours to better serve the needs of the players at this level. The **Tournament Training Group** is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.

***As always, Non-members should add \$25 (Lil' Ones, only \$15).**