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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

Court usage

It's summer time, and that can mean some busy courts, but there are still plenty of choice time slots to play tennis. Here's a quick summary of some of the busy times to plan around, make sure you have a reservation, or avoid:

Ace it! June 25th, all courts will be used from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

MTT: Monday Team Tennis is every Monday night from 6pm to 9:30p.m. and uses all of the courts.

Leagues: Most of our USTA League matches are on Saturdays and Sundays after 11 a.m. League matches use 3 courts, so there should still be 2-4 courts available, depending on the teaching schedule on the other courts (more teaching on Saturday than Sunday).

Weekly **Junior Program:** The summer junior program uses courts 4-7 on Monday through Thursday afternoons from 12 to 4 p.m. (courts 4-5 are used until 4:45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays too).

Court Washing: We try to keep the club clean, so we wash courts 4-7 on the last Friday of the month, and courts 1-3 on the first Friday of the month. Washing takes place between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. so plan around that. There will usually be a court or two available for play of the courts that are not being washed.

All of these events, plus all other reservations are posted on the club website on the **court scheduler**. The best way to insure a court is to make a reservation. Courts 4&5 (and court 2 when there is no teaching) are drop-in courts, unless they are being used for a club event. For club events, we tend to use the drop-in courts first, before taking reservation courts.

All Things Poaching

One of the things we love about doubles is the variety of strategies and options for playing the game. Not only is doubles about outhitting your opponent, or being in better condition, but it is also about outthinking them too. Students of the game spend hours learning about strategy and the strokes to execute different strategies. This month we are going to discuss poaching, one of the best tools you can use in doubles. Top level teams poach all the time, and one pro coach we talked to down at Indian Wells said that if you didn't poach in the top level of the men's game, you couldn't win. That sounds pretty important, since I like winning, so let's talk about poaching and figure out how we can use this important skill in our own game.

First of all, I make a **distinction between poaching and intercepting the ball**. To me, poaching is something you plan with your partner. Intercepting is when you see a weak shot, and you just go out there on your own and try to hit it. They can look the same, with the same result sometimes, but they are completely different, and combating them would require much different actions.

I think players should always be on their toes, balanced, well-positioned, and ready to intercept weak shots. Often that is not the case, but that should be the goal and the ideal. You don't really ever what to say to yourself, "I could have got that." If you are ready, you will.

So today, I want to talk about actual **poaching**. That is, teamwork

Summer Junior Clinics

We have a great program here at the Club, and registration is open. Go to page 4 of the newsletter to get all the details of Patric and Anna Marie's great program!

Classes began the week of June 13th and will run for 8 wonderful weeks. Check out the schedule and pricing on page 4. So far, the program has been very popular and the first two weeks sold out, so call today to reserve a spot before it is too late.

For more information contact Patric at the Club or at patrictennis@yahoo.com. Last summer was our biggest and best program ever. Join us for an even better 2011!

Court Washing

The courts will be washed on the first (courts 1-3) and last (courts 4-7) Fridays of the month from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Check the court scheduler to see which courts are available for play.

Monday Team Tennis

Monday Team Tennis started on June 13 with a great pizza kick-off party. We were scheduled to start on the 6th, but Mother Nature took her last shot at us and won, raining out MTT for the very first (and last???) time in our illustrious history. Strange weather. We have over fifty people playing MTT this year, and it looks to be a real fun year. Please remember that MTT takes all the courts on Monday night.

Reservation Tips and Etiquette

If you make a reservation, please use it, or cancel it on the website (as far in advance as possible). With lots of new members, we want to make sure that the courts are being used and not tied up by phantom reservations.

To cancel a reservation on the website, go to your reservation and click on it in the court scheduler. The details of your reservation will appear. In the lower left hand corner, is a yellow delete button. Click on that, and your reservation is gone. If you get to the club and there is a more preferred court than your reservation court, please delete your reservation before moving so people know the court is free. Let's be kind and thoughtful to our neighbors.

meant to take advantage of your opponent's skills (or lack thereof) and tendencies. Defined this way, poaching is simply a pre-made decision to switch sides of the court while play is in progress. (Basically, switch to Australian formation).

Communication is key (a doubles partnership is just like any good relationship: we need to be on the same page for success and happiness). There are several ways to communicate with your partner. You can talk to them, signal to them (with hand signals or verbal signals) or simply move and then when they see you go, they respond in a pre-planned way. The most basic signal is open hand for switching, closed hand for staying. Of course you have to make this, or whatever signal, in a way that your opponent can't detect it. The front person signals to the back person, and then the back person acknowledges in some way that they received the signal. My partner and I used to also have this verbal cue indicate where we were going to hit the ball ("OK" for wide, "Yes" for middle, or something like that). Or the front player can have the positioning signal, and then the ball position to follow (open hand go, finger or thumb point to the desired serve).

Starting Position is very important. You need to be close enough to the net, and far enough away from the sideline, that you can get over enough to cover the other side of the court in the short amount of time you have. Your ready position at the beginning of the point or exchange should be close to the mid point in the service box, both in terms of width and depth seems about right here. (See Fig. A below)

When you poach, the **movement** should be angled forward, as if you were trying to race the ball to the center strap.

Balance and grip. When you move, you should move where your body is still facing the net until you see if it is going to be a backhand or a forehand volley. Move with the grip set to the side that it is most likely to come on. So if your partner is serving to the ad court and you poached, you would move out ready to hit a backhand volley, while still facing forward so that you could hit a forehand if the ball was a bit behind you.

Timing. Timing is crucial to the difference between poaching and intercepting. When you intercept, you wait to see if it is a weak shot, then you go. You are trying to be a bit tricky. In poaching, you are responsible for the other half of the court (your partner is going to move to cover your alley – see Fig. A below), so you have to move soon enough to cover that side. They may see you go. That's OK. The intent is not to trick them, but to make them change their mind mid-shot, force them into a more difficult shot, and/or distract them.

When is crucial. You have to leave in time to cover the other side, and to communicate to your partner that you are switching (if you have not decided in advance). The back person needs to move in behind to cover the down the line.

Hitting while moving is hard. That's a fact. The more you get to the center and get set, the better you will hit the ball if it comes to you. Of course leaving early enough to do this might give them enough time to try to avoid you, but that is part of the point. You want them to try to change to a more difficult shot, or be distracted and miss.

The goal: **a game of thirds.** We're not looking to win every point. About a third of the time, you will knock the volley off for a beautiful winner. Why can't it be that way all the time, you are tempted to think? About a third of the time, they will either hit it past you, or you will miss the shot. Ouch those hurt. Rough on the ego, rough on the will and determination to keep poaching. So far, we have only been winning half the points when the ball is in play. But that is the key to success here. A third of the time they are going to miss trying to outthink you, change their shot, over hit, or just plain loose concentration. This last third, combined with the first third where you look brilliant, is the key to success on the poach. This is crucial so let me repeat: *you're only going to be brilliant about 1/3 of the time.* Be OK with that.

The Ad court dilemma: it's hard to win points as a serving team in the ad court. Normally we serve out wide to the backhand. Our opponent knows this, and cheats towards the backhand corner in an attempt to get as many forehands as possible, making our backhand target quite small. When the returner does hit a backhand, it goes crosscourt, at quite an angle away from our net person's backhand volley, and into the server's backhand corner (if we are talking right-handers here). They are both tough shots to hit, and it is even worse if the returner manages to run around and hit a huge forehand against our backhands or down the alley (Fig. B)

Backhands. The thing about backhands is that they usually go cross-court (Fig. A, shaded area). Across the body, especially from ad-court players who are receiving an angled serve. It is very hard to hit down the line off of this ball, especially if the serve has a lot of pace, spin or angle. So while the backhand return may be tough to hit, the serving team has the advantage of knowing where it is going the vast majority of the time.

Switch to Aussie. The backhand return is going cross-court (Fig. A), so why not poach, or switch to Australian formation. In other words, the net person switches from covering the down the line, to covering the cross-court, mid point. In other words, the net person goes and stands where the ball is going to go the vast majority of the time, giving us a better chance to knock off the volley. A serve to the forehand (Fig. B), stay where you are, and cover the down the line shot (grey area).

When you poach, the back person should move to the middle of the court, but not farther until they see where the receiver plays the ball. The back person has to cover the down the line, and the lob over. Think: "I'm playing singles" (see Fig A.).

Quote of the Month:

"Dominate players move because they choose to move, not because their opponents make them."
– Allen Fox, sports psychologist



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@
sbcglobal.net](mailto:orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net)

Head Pro:

Patric Hermanson
PatricTennis@yahoo.com

Associate Pro:

Anna Marie Gamboa
gamboa.tennis@yahoo.com

Junior Tennis Staff:

Emma LeHocky
George Kaiser

Weekend Staff:

Anastasia Kaiser

Newsletter Editor:

Keith Wheeler

Associate Editors:

Patric Hermanson
Marcy Sharafian

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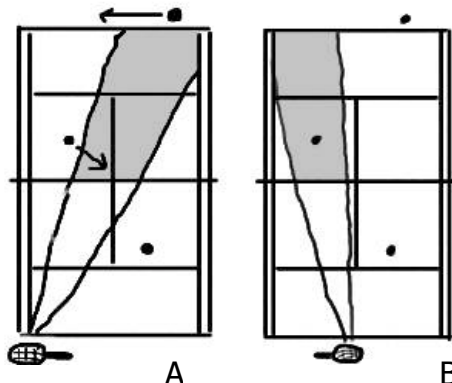
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more!*

Advantages over Australian. If the backhand return is going cross-court all the time, why not just start in Australian? It is a good point. The disadvantage of being in Australian is that if the returner happens to get around the serve for a forehand, they can hit a huge shot up the line (Fig B. gray area) that is going to be hard for the server to cover (so regular formation would be better here, as in Fig. B). Being in Australian puts a bit more pressure on the server to serve out wide. Secondly, moving while the returner is trying to hit, changes the problem they are facing from simply having to hit a difficult shot (when you are in Australian to start with), to having to decide to hit a difficult shot while the ball is coming at them at great speed. A much more difficult proposition. They don't know in advance where to plan to hit. Finally, if you start in Australian, they are likely to lob right off, probably to the back player's backhand. Not really the shot you want to be hitting.

Disadvantages to Poaching. Of course the disadvantage to poaching as opposed to starting in Australian is that you are probably going to be moving while they hit, which is much more difficult to adjust to the ball, especially the fluke hits that are not hit where you are expecting (sharply cross court). This risk has to be weighed against an honest appraisal of whether I am making enough shots, and whether my movement is making them miss about a third of the time. If they are missing most of the time, no worries!

Beating the Poach. Now let's walk on the other side of the net and let's say they are poaching on you. What do you do? It is crucial to remember that net play is a game of thirds. Server wins a third, you win a third, you miss a third. Don't miss, and the odds get quite even, or better. Also, remember that they are poaching to try to take away your best shot, the cross-court backhand. Think long and hard before you give into this temptation. And consider this, your best chance to win a match is to hit the ball well. If you hit the ball well, and force them to hit a moving volley, all is not lost. Occasionally (1/3 of the time), they will look brilliant, but another third, they will miss or you will end up scraping out the point. Changing your shot to a shot no one hits well, the backhand down the line off a cross-court ball, is pretty high risk. This doesn't mean you never hit down the line, but wait for a weak shot from your opponent or a time you can run around and hit the ball with a forehand. Chances are, the net person will just remember getting passed down the alley, not what the circumstances were, and that will swing the mental/emotional game of cat and mouse in your favor. So plan where you are going to hit the ball and stick to it. Don't let your opponent determine what you are going to do. And of course, hit as many forehand returns as you can (i.e., run around your backhand).

Why Poach? If you change one thing, you can change the match. Humans like predictability. If we always defend the court the same way, our opponents get into a routine, find their rhythm, and settle into a nice morning or afternoon of tennis. Our job is to not let that happen, unless they let us settle in to, and we are better players. I've seen and played in plenty of matches where one team was cruising to victory, and then the other team changed something, sometimes not even that effectively, but it threw the leading team completely off, and changed the outcome of a match. When you are losing, you have nothing to lose. Go for it; try to mix it up, break their rhythm. At the beginning of a match, poach a bit, hit a few balls down the alley, throw in a few lobs, don't let them get comfortable. A comfortable opponent is a tough opponent to beat. And not only that, but you probably made them comfortable. Shame on you. Good luck out there!



Mental Match Tip

It's summer, we're all playing a lot of matches, so this is a good time to remember one of the most important aspects of competing. Allen Fox says that we should "only think thoughts that help us."

Makes sense, and almost no one is able to do it through out an entire match (some of us can't make it one single game). No negative thoughts, no anger, no giving up, no admitting you're tired. Only empowering thoughts. Try it!

2011 Orindawoods Summer Tennis Camps

Welcome to the 2011 Orindawoods Summer Junior Tennis Program. Our Summer Program consists of eight one-week (Monday-Thursday) camps. In addition to taking our young players' games to a new level, our four day camps are full of good fun and good friends. Our energetic and professional staff has put together a positive and challenging instructional environment that will allow the students to grow both as tennis players and as people. Our camps will suit the beginner, just starting out, as well as the advanced player preparing for summer and fall tournaments. Non-members are welcome in all our classes.

Our **Full Afternoon Camp** is for kids 7-16. Players will be separated according to age and ability. The Full Camp will run from 12:00 to 3:45pm and consist of an *Instructional Block* from 12:00-2:00pm, where we will be developing the strokes, strategy, and footwork used in today's "modern game of tennis." Tennis games will also be a daily part of this block. There will be a break from 2:00-2:15pm. Campers should bring a snack for the break. At 2:15pm will begin the *Match Play Block*, where the campers will play supervised matches. The coaches will help the students understand how to use their strokes and strategy to enhance their match playing capabilities. Our younger campers will work with many aspects of the USTA Quick Start Program, making it easy for even the younger beginner to play matches. The Full Camp Day will finish at 3:45pm

If you are looking for a shorter tennis experience, you can sign up for our **Half Camps**. Pick what you are most interested in and join just one of our two tennis blocks, the *Instructional Block* or the *Match Play Block*.

Underneath the moniker of **Half Camps** we are also listing the Lil' Ones Camp. This camp is for the 4-6 year olds, and will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4:00-4:45pm.

We hope to see you this summer at Orindawoods! Make sure you sign up early.

2011 Weekly Summer Tennis Camps				
Camps	Ages	Days	Times	Cost per week Member/Non-member
Full Camp				
Afternoon camp	7-16	Monday-Thursday	12noon-3:45pm	\$180 / \$205
Half Camps				
Instruction block	7-16	Monday-Thursday	12noon-2:00pm	\$115 / \$130
Match Play block	7-16	Monday-Thursday	2:15-3:45pm	\$90 / \$105
Lil' Ones Camp	4-6	Tuesday & Thursday	4-4:45pm	\$30 / \$35

There will be a camp each week, June 13 through the week of August 1. Contact Patric (patrictennis@yahoo.com) to sign up or to get more information or call 925-254-1065. Enjoy!

Enrollment Form

Last Name _____ Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ Phone _____

Child's Name (1) _____ Age _____ Child's Name (2) _____ Age _____

Session 1	June 13-16	Full Camp ___ Half Camps Instruction Block___ Match Play ___ Lil' Ones ___
Session 2	June 20-23	Full Camp ___ Half Camps Instruction Block___ Match Play ___ Lil' Ones ___
Session 3	June 27-30	Full Camp ___ Half Camps Instruction Block___ Match Play ___ Lil' Ones ___
Session 4	July 5-7	Full Camp ___ Half Camps Instruction Block___ Match Play ___ Lil' Ones ___
Session 5	July 11-14	Full Camp ___ Half Camps Instruction Block___ Match Play ___ Lil' Ones ___
Session 6	July 18-21	Full Camp ___ Half Camps Instruction Block___ Match Play ___ Lil' Ones ___
Session 7	July 25-28	Full Camp ___ Half Camps Instruction Block___ Match Play ___ Lil' Ones ___
Session 8	August 1-4	Full Camp ___ Half Camps Instruction Block___ Match Play ___ Lil' Ones ___

Total Camp Cost:

Child (1) Cost: _____ + Child (2) Cost _____ -Discount for Child (2) _____ =

