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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

Twilight Tennis BBQ

It's summer! It's time to BBQ! And there is no better way to BBQ than to play tennis first, and then have someone do the BBQing for you. All you have to do is show up (and bring your own tasty beverage), hit a few balls, and sit back and relax. With the new lobby, we even have a solution for those occasionally "cooler days." Over the years, Orindawoods has held many Twilight Tennis BBQs. This summer will be no exception, with Twilights planned:

July 26 (Sunday, 5pm start), August 9 (Sunday, 5pm), September 12 (Saturday, 4pm) and October 11 (Sunday 4pm).

Twilights generally feature two hours of round robin tennis, followed by a steak or chicken dinner, with all the fixin's. For July and August, we will play tennis from 5-7 p.m., and eat dinner at 7:30. Injured, can't play? Well, come and eat!

To register, contact Keith at orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net or sign up on line by going to the club calendar and clicking on Twilight on July 26. The cost is \$20 per person (\$25 for non-members). Please indicate if you are playing tennis, and if you would like to feast on steak or chicken. These are essential questions to your playing and dining enjoyment. Don't mess up!

More Thoughts on "Character" and the Art (not Science) of Line Calling

In last month's article about "Character" (June 2015, available for download, orindawoodstennis.com) we painted the picture of the mythical (yet achievable) ideal performance state of having character on the court, and in life, both as a competitor, and as a person. In quoting Kipling, the person with character can "keep their head when all around are losing theirs and blaming you.... They can meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those imposters just the same."

We spoke of how players that cheat are somehow lacking something, some self belief, that allows them to stand on their own, and not only accept life, but deal with it effectively.

We went on to discuss several flashpoints that can come up in the course of a match, especially around the calling of lines and everyone's behavior around that tricky topic, as well as sportsmanship vs. gamesmanship in general. Obviously, there are many things to write about on those topics. I certainly opened a can of worms, a can that should probably be open. So this month, let's look inside the world of the unofficiated tennis match.

Your Feedback: Of course this talk of character led to some great discussions over the past month with various members, especially around the idea of "honest errors." Which, of course, we all make from time to time (more on that later).

I believe, at least consciously and in public, that most players would like to eliminate their bad calls. Most players want to be seen as fair, and honest. Therefore, the objective would be to call lines in a way that made it less likely that we were going to make errors, honest or not. So, let's begin with the best-known technique for humans making line calls in the real world.

Perspective (def: the appearance of distant objects to the observer): If Player A was returning serve in doubles, and player B was Player A's partner, positioned near the service line, picture this scenario. Let's imagine that your opponent serves the ball, the ball is travelling quite fast, with a great deal of spin. If you (Player A) are standing on the baseline returning serve, and your partner (Player B) is on the service line, a ball that lands just "out" will look "in" to you, and "out" to your partner (Player B). That's why the returner's partner (Player B in this example) should make the "long" calls. It is also why a lot of "long" serves get played in singles (where there is no Player B to help you out).

However, the returner (Player A), can see the width lines much better than a person standing in Player B's position, and so the returner (Player A) should make those calls. For example, a ball traveling down the centerline that is "out" (wide) will correctly look wide to you, but could look "in" to the receiver's partner (Player B). And a ball that hits the far sideline could look "wide" to Player B, but you (the returner, Player A) looking down that line towards the net can see that it is "in."

In other words, **the person who is looking most down the length of the line in question should make the call.** Line calls made across the lines are where the most mistakes occur. If most players just understood that perspective changes everything, and learn to defer to the players in the best position to make the calls, there would be fewer errors. The simple fact is, what you see, can be misleading, depending on how you are looking at the relationship between the ball and the line.

You only have to look at where the lines people are positioned in a professional match, and which lines they are calling, to verify this. We talked a lot about perspective when I went through umpire and referee school some years back. An interesting thing to note, is that the "chair umpire" is in a really lousy spot to call lines. They are looking across most lines, and down almost none. They told us that if we are in the chair, we should almost never over rule a linesperson (but it happens, because chair umpires have egos too). "Only overrule an obvious mistake."

I think if every player had to go to a clinic or watch a video just to understand perspective, it would clear up a lot of the honest mistakes. If you understand that when looking across a line, a ball is going to appear to be farther away than it actually is, you will realize that you can't trust exactly what you see, and take that into account when making a call.

The toughest call to make in all of tennis is when you get pulled wide in a singles match, and then your opponent hits the ball clear to the opposite sideline. Very hard to make good calls in that situation. If it looks close at all, you pretty much need to assume it was "in" to be fair.

Making line calls is a huge responsibility, and as we've discussed, there are times when we don't see very well. And yet it is our duty to make the call in an unofficiated match. The code states that if you are not sure, you must give the benefit of the doubt to your opponent. If we end up in a poor position and have to make the call, we should probably be a lot less sure than we often think we are. An "in" shot can look very "out" to us, but that doesn't mean we call it out.

Should Matches Be Officiated? Which of course brings us to the point that I briefly mentioned in the June newsletter (last month): the greater question of why in tennis the competitors themselves call their own lines? I played tournament volleyball, plus rec softball, and basketball, and there were always neutral officials. In volleyball, you couldn't have a team in the equivalent of USTA if you didn't have at least one referee (certified, took a test on the rules, passed an on-court evaluation) on your team, and you couldn't play in a tournament if your certified referee wasn't there. In a tournament, a team would play 3-4 matches, and referee at least a couple others (your team of six players had to provide at least 4 people to officiate). Every team took turns. It was just part of the schedule.

Why doesn't tennis? Probably two reasons, one is philosophical, and the other is practical.

The **philosophical reason** is that tennis as we know it in the modern world came out of nineteenth century upper class England, where all the participants were "gentleman" and "ladies." Cheating was so against the strict Victorian moral code that it just wasn't done. Most of that Victorian stuff died in WWI on the "Fields of Flanders", but not so much in tennis. When tennis expanded in the late 60s and early 70s to include everyone in society and transformed from an amateur sport to a professional sport, everything changed, but the old-world customs remained. Along with some other crazy ideas like clubs host teams and tournaments "for the good of the game" and get no income from allowing the USTA to run a business on their property (another topic entirely -- wanna get me started there?).

Practically, again looking at a professional tennis match, there are at least 7 and often 10 officials on the court, for 2 or 4 players. That is unworkable in the USTA league setting. Think of a five-line USTA match and all the people you would need. Half the membership of the club would be required to officiate one match.

Even the rudimentary solution of having a single, neutral "chair umpire" at the net, does help with bad calls (even though, as we have said, they can't see very well). But for league matches (unlike a volleyball tournament), it would be hard to have neutral people to do "chair umpiring." Could you imagine, Valley Vista was playing Heather Farms at Valley Vista, and Orindawoods has to send 5 people just to officiate? Captains, you think it is hard now to fill every position in the line up? Try having to fill those referee positions. Paid referees would greatly increase the cost of leagues, so that probably won't happen either (even though it is built into the costs of other sports).

Psychology:

"The problem with the subconscious is that it is subconscious." – Karl Jung

It is often run out there by various members and players that "we are all getting older, and we don't see so well any more." Basically, with aging eyes, it's natural to make more mistakes.

So here is the deal with aging eyes and honest mistakes. They go both ways. 50% in, 50% out. 50/50 happens some, but I would say the vast majority of "bad" calls are balls called "out" that were "in".

Why? Is the world populated by crooks? Probably not.

Everyone looks at the world through a lens. That lens could include character, fair play, Victorian ideals of being a gentleman, but it also could include the lens of wanting to win, needing to win, having to win, feeling like your self-esteem is on the line if you don't win, plus the league championships up for grabs, and USTA ratings, and all sorts of other things that cloud up the view (and you thought it was a clear, sunny day out there).

I remember watching a playoff match at the club 15 years ago, and a teammate of one of the players who was watching from the deck said out loud, for everyone to hear, "Why does [her teammate] call all the balls that land on the line good?"

So there are probably two kinds of people who make a bad call, ones that know consciously that they are doing it, for some Machiavellian reason, and those whose vision has been clouded by their lens. I think the vast majority of bad line calls fall into that second category. Basically, they just make a mistake, but that mistake is caused as much by their desire of a certain outcome as their bad or aging eyesight.

Are we, as players, somehow responsible for those "honest" mistakes? Do we have a responsibility to be aware of our clouded lens? In order to be fair, we have to remember that we are inclined

Quote of the Month:

"In every game or con there is always an opponent, there is always a victim. The trick is to know when you are the latter, so that you can become the former." – Guy Richie, *Revolver*



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to be biased. Playing ignorant, and hiding behind the "honest" in an error is still really cheating. We, as competitors, should know the challenges of the game we play.

Hey, I want to win as much as anyone. We are all human. The Code of Tennis says, "We give the benefit of the doubt to our opponents."

And what if your opponent either doesn't know this or has a much more, shall we say, opportunistic worldview? Well, that is what we discussed last month in our talk about character (June 2015, available on orindawoodstennis.com). Are they gaining an advantage? I think not, if you understand the character game and the way it plays out.

Two Opinions, One Decision: Sometimes there is a situation where a ball is going 1,000mph and taking into account all that we have discussed above, you see that the ball that was clearly "out." But your opponent, looking through his lens, believes the ball to be "in." Maybe it is an important point (match situation or emotionally / psychologically), and the opponent wanted this impressive shot to be good so badly in that he "saw" it that way. The interesting thing is, in this situation, both you and your opponent would "pass" the lie detector test. You both believe in your call.

You know you made the right call. Perhaps you partner even confirmed the decision (from their less advantageous position). It is your duty to make the call. Philosophically, it is not your highest duty to even get the call right, but you need to make the call so that the game can be played. Without someone calling the balls "in" or "out", the game can't even be played. Of course, we try to make correct calls, to the best of our ability. But the primary job is to make a call.

When opponent or anyone else challenges your call, especially strongly, that is a different deal. This situation can be a much bigger issue than simply about the call on that single point. It's really about authority. They are really challenging your right to make the calls. It is as if they are saying, "You can make all the calls I agree with, but if you are wrong, I get to decide." (Sorry, there is no court of appeals).

I've been a certified referee in both tennis and volleyball, and both schools of officiating teach you not to get into a conversation with the participants (who unfortunately, are your opponents in tennis, since you have a dual role, player and official). Repeat the call and get ready to play.

Saying, "the ball was out," or "I saw the ball out" are probably what is required. I like "I saw the ball out," as it reinforces it's my call, without saying, "it's my call," which is confrontational and often leads to more trouble. Saying how much it was out is not helpful, more information than required, and asking for trouble. I mentioned in last month's article the player that says a clearly very close call (either in our out) was "out by a mile," only reduces their credibility and causes emotional upset.

Of course, you have to consider here, if someone makes such a comment, are they looking for trouble (to throw you off -- see below).

Defending Your Turf In A Dog Fight: People that question calls can have different motivations. They could believe you made an error (probably). But in addition to that, they may have other motivations (not always conscious, by the way. Hello Karl Jung).

Tennis is a social interaction, some people are "A" dogs, and some are "B" dogs. You can be what you want to be in life, but in a tennis match, you can't allow someone to gain "the upper hand" on you socially. Deferring or demur is an express ticket to Palookaville.

Sports psychologist Allen Fox tells an amazing story of fighter pilots in the 20th century. 5% of the pilots were shooting down 95% of the enemy's planes. Didn't matter which country, same for every country. Quality of the planes wasn't really an issue either. That means 95% of the pilots up there were just there to get shot down by the "aces" on the other side. The "A" dogs. He argues tennis is the same. Some people win all the time, the others are who they beat. It's the real game behind the game.

Loss of Control: Another reason people question calls is that it drives them crazy to be out of control. These people want to win, and so want to control their environment and the outcome. And this may be a very important match to them. And of course, they are out of control of a lot of the game, and it drives them nuts. By the way, these are the same people that often "over coach" their partners. Which usually backfires.

Keep Your Mojo Against the Troublemakers: There are players out there, either

consciously or unconsciously, that know that if you play your best, you are tough to beat. So they will try to break you down. The fair way is with their tennis (lobs, consistency, spin, hustle, power, deception, placement, rhythm, etc...). The other way is with some sort of drama or gamesmanship. Bad line calls, confrontational behavior, rudeness, false sweetness ("your backhand is so good" just to get you to think about it and mess it up) and all kinds of other games. Those games, like cheating, all indicate they are scared, and fear you. See their weakness, keep your strength.

Character: I think what I was trying to say in last month's character piece is that the most dangerous opponent, the person you want to be, is the one who lives in the moment, accepts what comes, always gives their best effort, and has no need to "alter" reality, because no matter what happens, and what comes up, they are getting stronger.

That every time a fully developed person experiences life, they are learning, growing, and becoming better. "Everything is cool, everything is school." They realize, that when someone cheats, they are actually cheating themselves. Truly tough competitors (people with character) welcome what comes, they want tough matches, they welcome close matches, they want competition, because it makes them better ("if you want to get smarter, you have to play smarter opponents" – Guy Riche, *Revolver*). And if their opponent behaves badly (lines, attitude, gamesmanship), that doesn't bother them either, because it is just another area where they get stronger while the opposition proves they are weaker.

So what's the game, the con? The cheater thinks they are gaining an advantage by squeezing the court. Give the victim what they want, points, while you gain in character, self-belief and confidence. They are proving their fear and weakness, their lack of self-belief ("can't beat you without cheating"), and the self-doubt involved, while you, the opponent with character grows stronger and stronger, feeding off their fear. Good luck out there!

Summer Junior Tennis At Orindawoods

Welcome to the 2015 Orindawoods Summer Junior Tennis Program. Our Summer Program consists of eight one-week (Monday – Thursday) clinics. Our energetic and professional staff led by Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa has put together a positive and challenging instructional environment that will allow the students to grow both as tennis players and as people. Our clinics will suit the beginner, just starting out, as well as the advanced player preparing for the summer and fall tournaments. Nonmembers are very welcome in all of our Summer Tennis Clinic classes.

Clinic Schedule:

Orindawoods Clinics	Ages	Days	Time	Cost Per Week Member / Nonmember
Full Clinic				
Afternoon Clinic	Ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	12noon-3:45pm	\$205 / \$230
Half Clinics				
Instruction Block	Ages 7-16	Monday -Thursday	12noon-2pm	\$130/ \$145
Match Play Block	Ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	2:15-3:45pm	\$105/ \$120
Lil' Ones Clinic	Ages 4-6	Tuesday & Thursday	4:00-4:45pm	\$40 / \$45

2015 Enrollment Form

Last Name _____ E-mail _____
 Child's Name (1) _____ Age _____ Child's Name (2) _____ Age _____
 Address _____ City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
 EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ Phone _____

Session 1	June 15-18	Full Clinic ___	Half Clinic: Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil' Ones ___
Session 2	June 22-25	Full Clinic ___	Half Clinic: Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil' Ones ___
Session 3	June 29-July 2	Full Clinic ___	Half Clinic: Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil' Ones ___
Session 4	July 6-9	Full Clinic ___	Half Clinic: Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil' Ones ___
Session 5	July 13-16	Full Clinic ___	Half Clinic: Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil' Ones ___
Session 6	July 20-23	Full Clinic ___	Half Clinic: Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil' Ones ___
Session 7	July 22-30	Full Clinic ___	Half Clinic: Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil' Ones ___
Session 8	August 3-6	Full Clinic ___	Half Clinic: Instruction block ___	Match Play Block ___	Lil' Ones ___

Total Clinic Costs:

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

Make checks payable to **ORINDAWOODS**

Discount: 10% off the second child's registration in the same week. The discount is taken off the smaller of the two clinic costs