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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

Men's Lunch Bunch

The Men's Lunch Bunch Summer BBQ at Woodhall is on Thursday, June 25. The event starts around 11:30 a.m., with lunch served hot off the BBQ around noon. If you want to attend, please contact Chet Ferdun, Page Thibodeaux or Keith. The price is based on the number attending.

Monday Team Tennis

Monday Team Tennis starts on June 8. We are still taking sign ups for this great social event. MTT runs every Monday evening for twelve weeks of the summer. You do not need to be here all twelve weeks (we do let people go on vacation). We do ask that you would be available about 8 weeks out of the twelve.

Each night features men's and women's doubles, mixed doubles, triples, a wonderful dinner (bring your own drinks) and lots of fun and camaraderie.

The cost for the entire summer is \$50 per player. Your team (10-12 people) will be expected to prepare a couple of meals (which you are reimbursed for). Contact Keith at orindawoodstc@sbcglobal to sign up, or register on the website.

League Tennis

There is lots of ladies' league action at the club these days, especially on the weekends. We have a 3.0 team, two 3.5 teams and a 4.0 team playing in the adult USTA league season.

As for the men, there are people who would play, but forming a team requires a captain and some organization. Two challenges we seem to have here.

Height of the Ball

Do you love ping pong? It is a relevant question for us tennis lovers, because tennis seems to be getting closer to ping pong every day. Ping pong is a power game. The ball almost always bounces higher than the net, which means that a well-positioned player can take the ball near the height of the bounce and slam the ball back down into their opponent's side of the table. Compared to tennis, it is like an overhead on almost every shot.

Now the ball does not get up that high in tennis

Ace It!

Our Breast Cancer Awareness Day is June 27. The morning features our "Tour of the Pros" clinics put on by several local pros, including Keith and Patric. That is followed by the Ace It! Luncheon. The delicious lunch is accompanied by the presentation of the check to the Carol Ann Read Breast Center, as well as many exciting raffle prizes. The afternoon is all about the Ace It! Tournament, which features men's and women's doubles, plus mixed doubles too.

To register and support this great event, you can download an application on the Club's website, or pick up an application in the Club's lobby.

Ball Machine Club

The Ball Machine Club is in full swing for this season. For \$100 a year, you get unlimited access reserve the ball machine during the hours it is available (11 a.m. to 6 p.m. M-F and 12 noon to 6 p.m. on Sat & Sun). It is a great way to improve your game and get a great workout too. Playing tennis is a lot more fun than running or going to the gym.

Pool Is Open

Our wonderfully remodeled pool is open for the summer season. The surface is new, smooth and easy on the feet. New tile lines the rim. The spa has been upgraded to the latest safety standards. All this adds up to a great summer of fun in the water.

In order to open the pool this year, we had to make several American Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements. One included putting a lock on the gate. The access code is 3040, like the front door (but without the *). Please keep the gate closed at all times. I know this is a pain if you are going in and out, but the gate protects our younger members from running in the pool and drowning before mom and dad can catch up with them.

Pool Rules

We have a few simple pool rules that are all about your safety, and the safety of others.

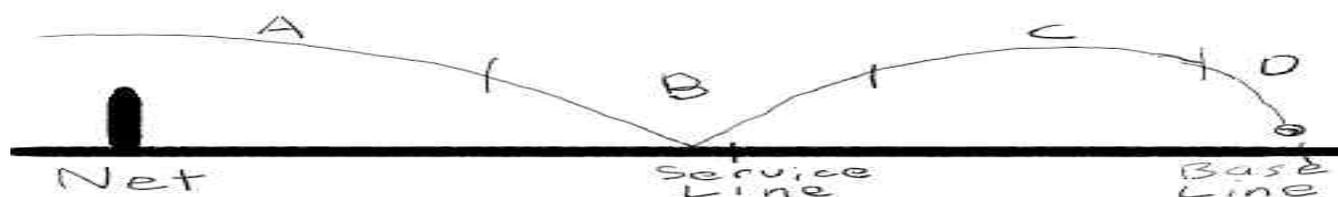
- No running
- No diving
- No glass (broken glass is invisible in water)
- The gas BBQ is for Club functions only
- Keep the gate closed at all times to protect our younger members
- Guest fees are \$5 for a family, \$3 for an adult, and \$1 for a child.

Enjoy!

most of the time, but a well positioned player can take the ball at an advantageous height and drive the ball into their opponent's court with pace and anger. In the last couple of articles (April and May) we have talked about taking the ball early, at the height of the bounce. This is especially easy to do on the return of serve. Taking the ball high, when it is above the height of the net, allows us to hit the shot much flatter (horizontal swing), harder shot, with less spin needed to get the ball in the court (than on a shot hit from below the net).

If we look at the flight of the ball, there are a couple of optimum places to make contact, and a couple of places that could very well put you at a disadvantage. If we look at the flight of a tennis ball from the side of the court (figure 1), we can see that it is higher than the net when it crosses over on to your side. If it wasn't higher than the net, it would go in the net, and you would win. This first area, Area A, is a good time to hit the ball (with a volley). The ball can be hit firmly, solidly here, with out the need to hit it back up to get it over the net.

Figure 1



As the ball continues its journey, gravity and air pressure have their effect on the ball, and it falls to earth, bouncing and rebounding back up (Area B). Contacting the ball in Area B limits how hard the ball can be struck as you have to hit the ball back up over the net, and then have it fall back down into the court (I would offer to call Area B the new "no man's land"). Once the ball bounces, depending on its trajectory, spin and air temperature, it will rise up again to a height over the height of the net (Area C). While this is much farther away from the net than its other high point (Area A), this is another place where the ball can be hit flat and hard. This is the optimum area for hitting groundstrokes. Often this is inside the baseline, which should give you some clue as to where you want to be positioning yourself.

Once the ball has crested in Area C, it soon is pulled back down to earth. It has lost most of its forward speed at this point, and can be falling almost vertically. This is Area D. Many people like to hit their groundstrokes in this area, because the ball is moving so slowly. The trouble is, that while these shots are the easiest to make, you have to hit the ball up, and that limits how hard you can hit it. Many players try to overcome this by hitting the ball with a lot of topspin to try to keep a faster shot in at the other end. This can work with limited success.

So where is the best place to hit the ball? Clearly, A and C are superior. B is the worst, and D is good for consistency, but poor for offense. Of A and C there can be some debate as to which is the

best, but the trouble with A is that the ball can be going very, very fast at this point. At Area C, the ball has bounced (which subtracts more speed than any other moment on its flight), so the ball is teed up and ready to hit. One of the problems with Area A is that you have to be very close to the net, or run the risk of being in Area B. When you are close to the net, you have less time to react, and you can be lobbed.

Quote of the Month:

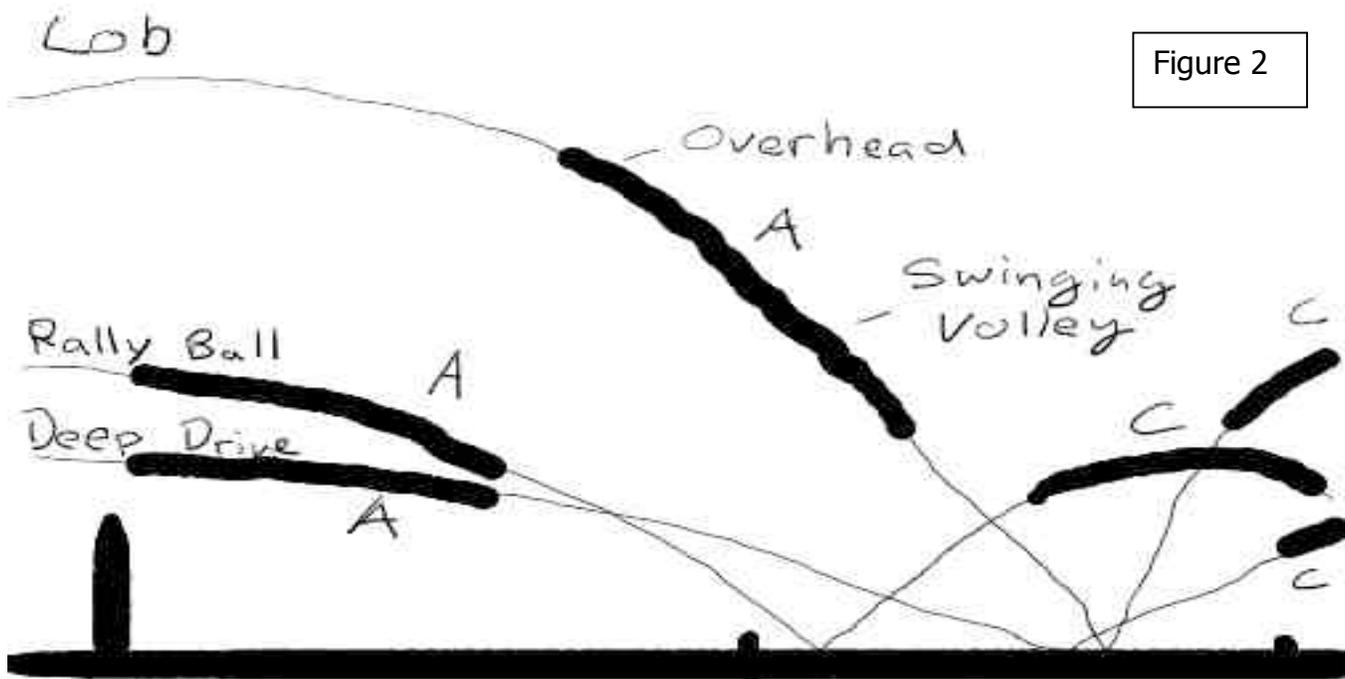
"Most players chase the puck around the ice. I stand where the puck is going to end up."

-- Wayne Gretzky, explaining why he was the greatest hockey player of all time.

Two potential downsides to being in Area A. Area A is a strong place to hit from, but your opponent might not let you hit the ball there. So I would position my players in C first, then A, sometimes in D, and as little as possible in B.

Now in doubles, I have two players on my team. I may very well want to position them in such a way that one is in Area A, and the other is trying to hit in Area C (settling for Area D from time to time). Some teams play two back, with both players lurking on the border between Areas C and D. For years tennis pros have been teaching both players to come in, but to really volley effectively, both players have to be in Area A, and few opposing teams will let you do that, as no one is covering the lob. This, and the fact that you can do more from Area C, is why we are seeing so many doubles teams playing one up, one back these days. One player attempts to take the ball in Area A, the other in Area C.

Now of course, from the ball flight examples below (figure 2), we can see that these areas are not always the same places on the court, depending on how our opponent hits. So we have to figure out, on average, where area C is. Notice that Area C is usually inside the baseline, however. In other words, most players stand too far back. Area A doesn't change that much. The trick is not to get caught in Area B that often. That is where we either miss shots, or hit weak shots that can be pounded from our opponent's Area C. Note that on a ball that is landing very deep in the court (a lob or a deep drive), we may actually want to hit the ball in Area A, but from the back court (swinging volley), rather than back up to where it is area C, but well behind the baseline where all we can do is lob.



A simple way to describe this is that we want to hit the ball above the height of the net as often as we possibly can. The ball may bounce, or not, but we want to drive it straight ahead (more like ping pong), and hit it up less often. We want to hit the ball much less in Area B, which is right around where the ball bounces. That means, we don't want to stand in the back half of the service box, or the front half of the back of the court. This is where the vast majority of the balls land. Now for years we have heard teachers say, hit the ball deep. And of course, if you are



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standing inside the baseline, this deep shot will be difficult. But the dirty little secret is, that while most players profess to hitting the ball deep, few do. This is because people don't want to hit the ball long. People also don't like hitting the ball in the net, so in actual fact, most balls that come over are the "rally ball" in diagram 2, not the drive. Just watch a match some time. Watch where the balls land. Watch how high most balls cross the net. Most are relatively high. Most land on the shorter side, and thus can be attacked by someone standing in close enough to catch them in Area C. The serve, unless hit very hard or with a ton of spin (how many club players can get that kind of serve in more than 20% of the time?), almost always resembles this rally ball, and can be attacked. As I mentioned last month, the return is your best chance.

Here is the greatest trick of all. Stand where the ball is easiest to hit. The hockey great Wayne Gretzky once said that the secret to his success was that most players chased the puck, and he stood where it was going. In other words, figure out, on average, where most of their shots cross the net if you are trying to hit in Area A and stand there, or figure out where their shot is going to crest after the bounce, and stand there if you are trying to hit in Area C. It is amazing how often players end up in the area where the ball is bouncing, Area B.

Play percentage tennis. If you hit easier shots more often than your opponent, you have the best chance to win. Now this means that they will sometimes hit shots you can't handle. Remember, the point is not to try to win every point, it is to win the match. A well-positioned, attack minded player, will probably win 6-2, 6-3. They will make some errors and lose five games or so, while winning twelve. That works for me.

Consistency is highly overrated in tennis (hitting from Area D). I know that is a bold statement, and obviously you can't be so wild that you lose almost every point. But on the other hand, the attempt to win every point by hitting every ball in (the rally ball) will actually leave you open to attack from the brave opponent who can see your shot as the turkey it is. This is why most professional players, who could no doubt hit hundreds of balls in the court in a row, seldom play this way. They attempt a shot that they will miss 10-20% of the time, in order to make it much tougher for their opponent to get the ball back, let alone attack. Unforced errors are not the worst thing that can happen in a match. Losing is. Good luck out there!

Summer Junior Program

Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Associate Pro Philip Laubscher are once again leading our summer program this year. Starting June 15, we will offer 8 weeks of tennis camps this summer. Each week is individual, so you can sign up for one week, all eight, or anything in between. The weeks of June 29 and July 20 will be our Splash and Smash camps, which include an hour of swimming. The other six weeks will be Tennis Development Camps, with the focus completely on tennis. We offer three different age groups: little ones (ages 4-6), Tennis Clubbers (ages 7-10) and Big Boomers (ages 11+). For the full schedule of classes and pricing, visit our website, call Patric at the Club (254-1065) or pick up a brochure in the Club House. We look forward to seeing you this summer!