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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

Lobby Project

Construction Update: This is so exciting! Our lobby renovation project is well underway. We have added a new roof, installed new cabinets and plumbing, and most importantly, added a light switch! Yes, for the first time ever in the history of Orindawoods, you can actually turn the lights on in the lobby. When it gets dark. Imagine that! Light when you feel like it. Stunning! When you choose to do so! Whoa! "Let there be light." We have stepped up to nineteenth century technology. Thomas Edison would be oh so proud.

And yes, that is a sink in the middle of the countertop. I'm stunned. No more putting dirty dishes in a plastic trash bag in the back of our cars so that we can take them home and wash them in a modern (running water) kitchen. Another 19th century convenience achieved. We even feature hot water. No!

Next year, we might even get rid of the outhouses (just kidding, we did do that a couple years back).

The final phases of the project will be moving the back wall and doors to their new location, relocating the iron rod fence, and redoing the flooring. Goodbye gross carpet!

With the new floor, you will be able to spill to your hearts' content. Some of you are highly skilled at spilling. Clean floors, may we all live to see the day!

Bathroom Closure: There will be a few days when the lobby, office and locker rooms will be closed due to the floor installation. We don't know the exact dates yet, so I will e-mail everyone as soon as I know.

Sorry, closing the bathrooms is a real inconvenience (at least you don't work here --- ugh), but it is the only way to get a new floor. It will be worth the mad dash to the local service station. I think. I hope. I trust. I pray. I hold.

Actual dates of completion of the lobby project are hard to predict -- this is construction after all -- but we are hopeful that we will be all done by mid March or so, in time for the Tulip Tournament and MTT. "Happy days are here again!"

Tennis Tip

Some Things Change...

Yes, some things change, some things remain the same. When I was growing up and learning tennis in the late 60s and early 70s, the emphasis was on keeping the ball out of the net. "Lift the ball." Hitting in the net was heavily frowned upon. My coach would say, "You're giving them a free point. Keep it out of the net. Give them a chance to hit the ball, even if your shot might go long or going wide."

Of course in those days, there were lots of serve and volleyers, and so your opponent was often at the net and had to decide whether to volley your shot, or let it go and take a chance on it falling in. A bit risky.

Back In The Day: In 1970, "Don't hit the ball in the net" was the basis of the stroke mechanics we learned.

Targets and practice were centered on hitting the ball deep in the court, far away from the net. Whether it was a groundstroke, or an approach shot, or a

Ball Machine Club

It is time to either renew, or join the Ball Machine Club for 2015. So if you are a previous Ball Machine Club member and you want to continue, please write a check to Orindawoods for \$110. The ball machine club runs March 1 to March 1, 2016.

If you have not been a ball machine Club member before, but really want to improve your tennis, your fitness and your fun, join us for the 2015 ball machine season.

For the \$110 fee, you get access to reserving the ball machine (court 3) as much as you are able. Ball machine use is restricted to before 9 a.m. and after 10:30 a.m. (weekdays, 12 noon weekends). There are no ball machine reservations allowed in the evening. If no one is using the court, then ball machine use is permitted.

The general idea here is that we don't want one person using a court during prime time that two to four members could be using instead.

The daily ball machine fee is \$8/hour, so you can see that you can get your \$110 worth very fast, if you are someone who uses the machine a lot. It's a great deal. The Club does not consider the ball machine a profit center. Mainly, we want people to have a great opportunity to practice, and get exercise, while covering the costs of maintaining and replacing the machine from time to time. Even a ball or two.

Join The Fun!

volley. "Keep the ball deep" was deeply implanted in my psyche. Branded on the side of my brain.

If you missed long, it was somehow much more forgivable than in the net. The idea was that out of ten mistakes, seven should be long, two wide and one in the net. And the one mistake that fell in the net should have been a ball that you mishit, not one you struck well or solid. Good contacts should clear the net.

In those days, shots had to be struck in a way that they were lifted up, but were not hit so hard that they would sail long before gravity could pull them back down. There was some spin to help, but nothing like what we see in today's game. In other words, there was a real limit to how hard the ball could be played. Coaches talked out of both sides of their mouths. "Get the ball up over the net, but oh, keep it in too."

Side Note / Mental Walkabout: It is interesting, but certain shots like the serve, the overhead and the volley have not changed that much in the past sixty years. Elite serve or volley technique from the 1950s looks about the same as it does today. Someone like Poncho Gonzales, if he were a young man today, would have a very good serve in the modern game. A top pro today, with a wood racquet, can serve just about as hard as with today's fancy racquets. True fact, lab tested. This is because the angles involved in making these shots, the physics and the technique used, was optimized a long time ago. Despite what we hear, the racquet composition is not a big factor in increased speed on the serve. The amount of power and spin required to hit an effective first serve is about the same, and players used the same basic throwing or slinging technique in those days as they do now.

2015: Back To the Future: The real change is in how ground strokes are played from around the baseline. This is where the real difference can be observed (and of course, that change in groundies has had a big resulting effect on net play as well, as we will see below). Simply put, groundstrokes have become more like serves. Top practitioners sling the ball, not strike it.

For a player starting out today, there has been a subtle, but significant change in the underlying groundstroke philosophy. The main emphasis in tennis in 2015 has changed to: "Don't hit the ball long."

It is almost as though "don't hit the ball in the net" is assumed, and now tennis has moved to a new era: "don't hit the ball long." This goal of not hitting long has been accomplished by putting lots of spin on the ball. Tennis has become a game where we are "chasing spin." Make your shots fool proof. Basically, "Play the ball with so much spin it can't go long." Or wide.

Of course with so much spin, and the resulting downward arc in the flight of the ball, we can now hit the balls so much harder than with the more direct, flatter shots of yesteryear. No longer do we rely almost solely on gravity to get the ball to drop. Tennis has changed from a touch game to a power game.

The Nadal Problem: The finest practitioner of this modern style, Rafael Nadal, has what I term the "Nadal Problem." The Nadal Problem is that Rafa hits with so much spin that he can't hit it long.

That is the positive side of the Nadal Problem. The negative, or challenging side, is that he has to hit it high enough that his ball doesn't spin down so fast that it goes in the net.

Modern Corrections For Modern Problems: With this modern style, errors really come down to two things, with two basic corrections. 1) If the ball goes long, you didn't put enough spin on it. In the old days, if the ball went long, it was generally because you hit it too high and too hard and you should slow down and aim lower. Now you need more spin (don't lower your sights), so you should speed up, and brush the ball faster. This is a big difference not only physically (speed up, aim high vs. slow down, aim low), but emotionally and mentally as well (see below).

2) If the ball goes in the net (with spin), then you didn't aim high enough. Aim higher. Same as in yesteryear, except now, you can hit it much harder.

Think how positive this is for the mental game. When you need control, instead of acting scared and slowing down you go for it more (more spin, quicker stroke). The more spin, the more control, your

confidence grows, you "hit out on the ball" and the results follow. The trick is to aim high, and hit with a lot of spin (the Nadal Problem).

Tough On Us "Old" Folks: The big error to watch for is that in the effort to make the ball go higher, make sure the player doesn't flatten out the stroke (less spin). You need to make sure that the spin is there, and you are just aiming that spin higher. In general terms, it means the modern player tilts their body back more at

Quote of the Month

Quote #1: "Intrinsic over extrinsic"

Quote #2: "Jazz [tennis] is what happens in the space between the notes [hits]"
– Miles Davis [sort of]



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impact, while stroking vertically to produce spin (and not horizontally, which would produce distance). In the old days, when we hit in the net, we would aim the horizontal stroke a bit higher, but had to make sure we didn't hit it too hard.

For those of us who are coming from more traditional, flatter strokes, and attempting to move towards more modern strokes, it is psychologically hard to aim high, because even if we are learning the modern stroking pattern, emotionally aiming higher makes us fear that the ball will go long. We just don't trust the spin to keep it in. An irrational fear, but a fear all the same.

Violin Moment: For a kid who has never hit a ball that doesn't spin, they don't have this fear. "Kids have it so easy these days. Back when I was a kid, I had to walk five miles to school each day in the snow, and it was uphill both ways." That's just old folks whining, and it has gone on as long as there have been old folks. The difference being, now it's us.

Strategy and Tactics Change: In terms of modern strategy, we don't observe the same emphasis on hitting deep either, as a topspin ball tends to bounce deep, even if it actually lands in the middle of the court. Look how far behind the baseline most players play today (think Nadal again here), as opposed to in the past. The spun balls are pushing players back.

Players tend to come to the net less than in the old days for several reasons. First, with the ball in effect "being deeper" because of the bounce of the spinning ball, it is hard to find short balls to even consider coming in on (i.e. having enough time to hit and then get into an effective volley position).

The ball they are hitting back to us when we are at the net is traveling much faster. There is much less time to react and the shot is more difficult because it is dipping so much. This forces the volleyers of today to aim up, and thus have to take more and more speed off of their shots so that their volley does not go long. It's tricky to slow down a high-speed ball. Requires a lot of skill. Today's volleys are much more difficult due to the speed and spin of the incoming ball.

Plus, our opponent doesn't hit the ball out very much (due to all the spin). Net players count on putting pressure on their opponents and forcing errors, but with all this spin, there are fewer errors. Fewer free points. The free points were the margin of victory in the net rushing game. That's what made it pay off.

It gets worse. Not only is there less time to react at the net, but the area we have to cover is much greater (the ball can come much higher, or more angled away from us, and with all this spin, still drop in). It's as if we are a soccer goalie, and they just double the size of the goal behind us. There is more area to cover due to the spin, and we have less time to cover all that space. All this has made the net game largely unviable in today's singles, and much tougher in doubles.

Just Spin Baby: So the increased difficulty of net play has made it much more rare to see net play in tennis (even doubles). The resulting less net play just compounds this spin phenomenon, because with less net play, it is more important that you don't hit the ball out. You see, most modern players, staying in the backcourt, can wait to see if the ball is in or out. The poor net player must decide without really knowing for sure. Much less guess work when you stay back. Of course this makes it even more important that you don't hit a ball out, that you spin, so you don't make mistakes.

So we come full circle. Players with modern strokes, designed to prevent the ball from going long, also have to focus on aiming high, so the ball doesn't go in the net. So some things change, some things remain the same. The cause of why we might hit the ball in the net is completely different, but we still don't want to hit it in the net. Good luck out there!

Spring Junior Program 2015
March 16th – June 5th

The 2015 Spring Junior Clinics begin the week of March 16th, and will continue thru the week of June 1st. There are no classes during the Spring Break week of March 30th through April 3rd. Program leaders for the eleven-week session are Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa.

Level	Class	Time (s)	One day/week	Two Days
I	Lil'Ones (ages 4-6)	Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm	\$145*	\$230*

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.

II	Future Stars (ages 7-10 years)	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm	\$275*	n/a
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The Future Stars Group is for our 7 to 10 year-old players. The players will be working with Ten-and-under balls on 36' and 60' courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games and match play are all part of the curriculum.

III	Tennis Development (ages 11-14)	Thursdays 4-5:30pm	\$275*	n/a
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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.

IV	Tournament Training	Wednesday 4:30-6:30pm	\$370*	n/a
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The Tournament Training Group is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out. Players already in the program will be promoted when they are ready.

***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 the rain, illness, vacations, etc...

Special Discount: 10% discount off the cost of second sibling. 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. Conditions are also listed on Orindawoodstennis.com. Bottom of the home page.

Tennis shoes required (no shoes that mark the court),

For more information please check out the club website or call Keith or Patric at the Pro Shop. To sign up, e-mail Patric at patric.owtc@yahoo.com or call the Pro Shop at (925) 254-1065.

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