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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](http://www.orindawoodstennis.com)

*"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it" – Celia, As You Like It, Act II, Scene IV*

## **Spring Junior Program**

The spring session of our Junior Program begins the week of March 21<sup>st</sup>. See all the details and pricing on **page four** of this newsletter. Join us for a fun spring!

### **Return to TRX**

After several rained out Saturday mornings, our **Fit and Hit** class with Anna Marie is back and rolling. Time to get back in tennis shape? Fit and Hit is a great solution. Our hour and half class runs from 7:30-9 every Saturday morning, and the cost is \$20. The time is split evenly between hitting tennis balls and working out on the TRX and TRX Rip Trainers. TRX is an exercise system that basically uses your own weight to help you get stronger and/or more flexible. Almost every exercise involves using your core, so it is a great way to get the whole body in shape. You can register for each week's class by going to the club calendar on the website and clicking on "Hit and Fit". Come join us, it's both fun, great hitting practice and a great way to get in shape.

### **USTA Adult League**

The USTA 18+ Adult league is starting up in March. As of publication, we have women's 3.5 (captain Julie Bell) and women's 4.0 (captain Alisa Riahi) entered. Contact the captains if you are interested. We want to have teams at OWTC!

### **Tennis Tip:**

#### **Firing Sequences: Ready, Aim, Fire**

There is a rhythm or firing sequencing to executing your best strokes. I think most of us just see the ball and try to hit it, without much thought as to what we are doing, once we commit to swing. We think, "Backswing, follow through" and hope something good happens in the middle. And of course, the outcome is a collision, and mixed results. Basically, because stroking in tennis seems to happen so fast, we are ignoring examining / controlling contact, the single moment when we have some control over the shot. In actual fact, if we break down this crucial moment of the motion, we end up with far more control, and useful power, than if we just get ready, and then swing, and finish.

**Components of Contact:** There are at least three major parts or components to contact. As mentioned above, the trouble is that these happen in such rapid succession, faster than we can think, certainly faster than we can see, that most people just give up and whack the ball and pray for a good result. This mistaken belief that there is not enough time has ruined many a shot. Just because there isn't much time, and that it is difficult to think more incrementally about contact, doesn't mean we shouldn't attempt a better method. No need to dumb-down for mere simplicity sake. Contact is too important to leave up to mere chance.

Contact consists of three basic components, or elements that seem essential:

- 1. We have to find the ball (ready)**
- 2. We need to square to the target (aim)**
- 3. We have the option to add or subtract speed and spin (fire)**

So we have to first find the ball. That means the racquet needs to either be in the way of the ball, or move to the ball. On most strokes, we position the ball to the side of us, so it follows that the primary move of the racquet should be towards the ball, or to the side (I spoke a lot about this in the Feb 16 newsletter). Or another way to say this is we move the racquet towards the **low inside edge** of the ball (ready). Second, once we get to the ball, the racquet string face needs to move so it points towards the target. **We aim with the way we point the**

## **Ball Machine Club**

As I mentioned last month, the Ball Machine is a great way to both get in shape, and get your tennis game in shape. Here at Orindawoods we have a Ball Machine Club to make that even easier. **The membership runs March to March.** So register or reregister this month.

Our annual Ball Machine Club is specially designed for the power users of the ball machine. For \$110 / year, you get unlimited access to the ball machine (when it is available). You are paid for the year, and simply have to make a reservation and away you go to a better tennis game and better fitness.

**Ball Machine Hours:** The ball machine can be used before 9 a.m. every day of the week, and after 10:30a.m on weekdays and 12 noon on the weekends. There is no advanced reservation ball machine use in the evenings.

### **30 years of service**

I was at the club the other day, minding my own business, when I got a package in the mail from the United States Professional Tennis Association. I opened it up, and inside was a letter and a pin commemorating my 30 years of service as a USPTA Tennis Professional. Wow. Thirty years, has it really been that long? And 20 of those years here at Orindawoods. I think about how tennis has changed and evolved over that period, what I have learned over those years, all the people that I have helped, and it makes me proud to have chosen the work that I have done. I'm still fired up and excited about helping people become the best they can be.

The only question I had was, how is that possible, thirty years of service, when I'm only 29 years old?  
-- Keith

**strings**, and not the way the racquet moves. So right after contact on the low inside part of the ball, we straighten the racquet strings to face the target. This best achieved by **continuing to push to the side**, and let the string face rotate naturally to the direction you want to point. Most people get confused on this point. It is very common to swing toward the target, with a lot of resulting mishits and errors. Correct by moving the racquet towards the ball (to the side) and point the strings toward the target. These are two separate moves, and require fine attention to differentiate between the two. Finally, we need to **add or subtract energy** (power and spin). We can only do this if it doesn't mess up steps one and two, finding the ball, pointing the strings. We want to accelerate (fire) in a way that doesn't compromise the connection with the ball or the way we are pointing the stings (aiming). The best way to do this is to continue **to push out to full arm extension and then turn our arm** and thus rotate the racquet back over our shoulders. This process of extending and turning (the windshield wiper) creates rapid acceleration ( $\text{Force} = \text{mass} \times \text{acceleration}$ ).

**Pinball, and What It Has To Do With My Tennis?** Have you ever played pinball? Are you a Pinball Wizard? Is your name Tommy? Hitting a topspin groundstroke in tennis has many things in common with pinball. If you have ever played much pinball, you know the ball rolls down the table to your flipper. If you flip it too soon, the ball kind of just dies, or dribbles off the end and then falls between the two flippers and you lose. In order to most effectively play pinball, you let the ball roll down to the flipper (which is passive at a 45° angle to the path of the ball). The ball then rolls down toward the flipper's tip. Next you push the button, which moves the flipper out. It essentially throws the pinball back up the table. It is not a hit, but a throw. The flipper moves out towards the opposite side. Since it is attached at the base (like our arm), it rotates.

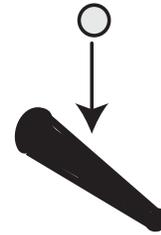
Tennis is similar at the highest, most effective levels. **Ready:** Notice that when we find the ball, we touch the low inside. Like the flipper, we are not pointing in the direction that we want the ball to go at first contact. Move too soon, the tennis ball just dies, same as the pinball. If the racquet just waits at contact, the ball just bounces off. **Aim:** After we catch the ball, we then push out to straighten the face toward the target, just like the flipper pushes out to point where we want the pinball to release. **Fire:** Depending on how fast we accelerate the racquet, or the flipper, the ball goes harder or softer. In tennis, because it is three dimensional (where pinball is in two dimensions on a table), we can also add the spin element to the shot during this acceleration (brush / roll up or down).

### The Mental Game:

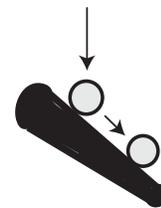
#### **Presence**

I was playing a match recently and I was very focused on what I was doing. Not on winning and losing, but on the pure mechanics of playing tennis. Stroking (see above, Ready, Aim, Fire), footwork, anticipation, etc.. I was particularly interested in accepting what was happening (how the ball was coming to me – not letting huge serves freak me out), and how to control my response to that in a way that was most effective. I wanted

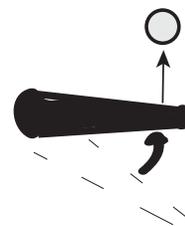
## Pinball and Tennis



1. Ball drops towards the flipper



2. Ball rolls down the flipper



3. Flipper swings out and up, slinging the ball.

### **The Four Weapons**

There are four weapons in tennis: Time (which includes power, depth and the distance between you and your opponent), Placement, Spin and Deception.

The best shot (forehand, backhand, serve, volley) is often not the most powerful, or the one with the most spin, or the ball that is the best placed, but the shot that combines the four weapons the best.

It is generally agreed that Pete Sampras had the best serve in tennis history. His serve was not the fastest, by a long shot, but he was very accurate, had a high rate of spin, and could disguise his shot very well. The combination of those four weapons made his serve the best ever.

Deception is often the forgotten tool. If your opponent doesn't know where the ball is going, it is much harder for them to defend. Therefore, for the skilled player, deception is often the weapon of choice, the one that separates them from the rest.



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### Quote of the Month:

*"Gamble everything for love, if you are a true human being. If not, leave this gathering. Half-heartedness does not reach into majesty. You set out looking for God, but you keep stopping for long periods at mean-spirited roadhouse" -- Rumi*

to stay appropriate. I had a "learner's mind" or a "beginner's mind", and therefore I was open to what was happening. My focus was purely on process, and the interest and enjoyment of that. Interestingly enough, the outcome, which was not my focus, went very well. I won easily. Some backstory: I was very tired that night. I had taught six lessons during the day, so I didn't really want to play very long. So I won fast. Simple solution. Of course the joke is, if I had tried to control the outcome, the game would have probably lasted hours. I would have been frustrated and exhausted, more and more tired with each effort, with each attempt to control. (Or I would have tired so hard that I played badly, lost fast, and went home discouraged). On that magical night I just stayed with my strokes, did them as best as I could, learned from each action, enjoyed each hit, and the games rolled by quickly.

**The Zone.** Why can't we do that all the time? Why can we just zone at any moment? We just flip a switch and we are right there, here and now. Since tennis doesn't seem to work that way, how can I get in the zone?

Zen teacher Tara Brach had some interesting ideas I wanted to share on performance, and doing our best. Being the most present we could be. The goal is satori, or being one with what you are doing. Inhabiting the moment most fully. She said that it didn't matter what your spiritual beliefs were, Christian, Buddhist, Islam, Jewish, whatever. What people that found a high state of presence and performance all seemed to share a few key ideas. The first idea is that they were **open** to what was happening. Like a clear sky, with no clouds. No distracting thoughts, or hidden or unhidden agendas (clouds). Second, they had a genuine level of **interest** (the light of the sun). They were absorbed, they were paying attention. They were curious, not defensive. They wanted to know, to learn, to find out. No results are unacceptable. Accept reality. There were no mistakes, only lessons. Each moment, each action, builds to the next. To who you are becoming. Finally, they had a **friendly**, non-confrontational attitude with the world, with reality (the sun warmed them). "It's all good." A beautiful, clear, warm, sunny day.

**What About Winning?** Sure, we like winning, we want to win. And yet, focusing on the outcome pretty much blocks the door into presence, into the zoning, into high performance. And high performance is your best chance to win. It's the great paradox of competing, of competition. Ask Cam Newton, or millions who have ventured forth before him, demanding victory. By the end, you are so discouraged you don't dive for a fumble.

We participate in an activity that is ongoing. Whose conclusion is unknown at the time in which we are living. To swim in this sea, we need the right kind of tools. Striving for victory is harmful, not helpful. Instead, inquire into what is happening, be open to life, and trust in the process.

*"True inquiry doesn't land on an answer, it opens to a mystery that is meant to be lived." -- Tara Brach*

A win is a result, playing is something we do, that we live. See / feel the contrast? They are such different things. Playing is a mystery, the outcome is yet to be revealed. Often we fear the unknown, and attempt to control the outcome. But there can be great joy in the process, just accept that fear, yet remember the reason we play, the joy of doing.

*"I want to believe that I'm looking into the white fire of a great mystery. I want to believe that the imperfections are nothing, that the light is everything. It is more than the sum of each flawed blossom, and fading. And I do". -- Mary Oliver*

We think that winning will give us something, something we can hold on to. "I won that match, I beat Bertha". And yet victory is just a thought, a thing that can fade, that doesn't last, that others may not value. What lasts? What is real?

*A billion stars go spinning through the night  
Blazing high above your head  
But in you is the presence that will be  
When all the stars are dead -- Rainer Maria Rilke*

# Orindawoods

## Spring Junior Program 2016

### March 21<sup>st</sup> – June 3<sup>rd</sup>

The 2016 Spring Junior Clinics began the week of March 21<sup>st</sup> and will continue thru the week of May 30<sup>th</sup>. **There are no classes during the Spring Break week of April 4<sup>th</sup> through April 8<sup>th</sup>.** Program leaders for the ten-week session are Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa. Coach Patric and Coach Anna Marie will incorporate aspects of the USTA 10 and Under Tennis Program into the Level I and II Classes: red, orange and green balls, and appropriate courts, nets and racquets for your child's age and development. Check with Patric for where your child fits in best.

Level	Class	Time (s)	One day/week	Two Days
I	<b>Lil'Ones</b> (ages 4-6)	Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm	\$135*	\$215*

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	<b>Future Stars</b> (ages 7-10 years)	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm	\$250*	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 Quickstart balls on 36' and 60' courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games and match play are all part of the curriculum.

III	<b>Tennis Development</b> (ages 11-14)	Thursdays 4-5:30pm	\$250*	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	<b>Tournament Training</b>	Wednesday 4:30-6:30pm	\$320*	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

\***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. Court conditions are also listed at **orindawoodstennis.com** at the 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](mailto:patric.owtc@yahoo.com) or call the Pro Shop at (925) 254-1065.

**Join us for a great Spring of Junior Tennis at Orindawoods!**