



May 2012
Volume 18, Issue 5

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

Pool Opening

We are planning to open the pool on Mother's Day weekend, May 11-13. The pool hours are from dawn to dusk. Of course, pools are a lot of fun, but we have to observe a few rules to keep us all safe and happy.

Pool rules:

- No lifeguard, swim at your own risk
- No children under the age of 14 without adult supervision
- No running
- No diving
- No glass in the pool area
- Be respectful of others

The pool is kept at 81 degrees to the best of our ability (weather being what weather is: hot, cold, windy, rainy). Enjoy a great summer!

Tennis Tip:

It's the Middle, Stupid

In the 1992 presidential election, President George HW Bush was matched against a largely unknown governor from the small southern state of Arkansas. Bush had won the cold war, saved Kuwait by defeating Iraq and tried to help out in Somalia in the post USSR new world order. He was a national hero, and a well-liked man by most everyone (except, perhaps, the broccoli growers – Bush famously hated broccoli). And yet Clinton somehow won that election because despite all that Bush had done on the international front, the central issue on voters' minds that fall turned out to be the economy. "It's the economy, stupid" was Clinton's reminder to himself and his staff to stick to the central, most important theme, and not fight Bush on leadership and foreign policy, where he had no chance.

Just like an election, there is a lot going on in a doubles tennis match. There are all sorts of issues, and yet, if you can find the one important key to victory, you can win a match against better players, and all sorts of odds and bad conditions. The central rule or issue in doubles is:

The team that controls the middle, controls the match.

Print it on your racquet, your forehead, your partner's forehead, your side of the net strap, whatever works, but don't forget this key fundamental. Or you can just repeat to yourself over and over again, "It's the middle, stupid."

I watch match after match here at the Club, and see various teams struggle because they just can't remember that simple, yet challenging fact. Often the most important stuff is so easy to see from the deck, but so hard to do down on the court.

How Doubles Has Changed: This recognition that it is critical to control the middle of the court has led to the biggest change in tennis strategy in years: the switch from classic doubles to modern doubles. Let me explain how these two strategic systems work. If we divide the court into six zones (see Fig. 1), and divide the net into 4 sections or windows, we can better understand how this works.

In **Classic doubles**, there are lots of team rules. Two players working together. Teamwork is paramount. The idea is to divide the court. One player takes one side, his partner the other. Playing side by side is preferred. So the server or returner would come forward, and both players would play side by side in zone two, creating a barrier for defense. Both are

Monday Team Tennis

Monday Team Tennis begins Monday, May 7. MTT takes all the courts on Monday evenings from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.. If you have not yet registered for MTT and you want to play, if you beg, who knows, we may let you in. The cost is \$50 for members, and \$70 for non-members, for a summer's worth of BIG fun.

June 23

Ace It!

Ace It!, our breast cancer awareness day is set for Saturday, June 23. Believe it or not, this is the tenth year we have held Ace It! at the Club. In that time, we have raised well over \$100,000 in support of the battle against breast cancer. All of the proceeds go to the Carol Ann Read Breast Center at Alta Bates.

As always, Ace It! will feature a morning session Tour of the Pros instructional clinics, followed by the Ace It! luncheon on the Club's deck. The Ace It! Tournament will follow from 1-4 p.m. at the Club and other facilities in the area.

To register for Ace It!, pick up a registration form at the Club, or download one from the Ace It! page on the Club's website (under events).

If you have any further questions, contact Keith at the Club. Hope you can join us for Ace It! 2012!

League Play and Court Usage

The weekday leagues have all finished their seasons now, which means that there are no matches on Monday and Friday mornings until school starts in the fall. This frees up a lot of time for weekday morning play during the spring and summer. Enjoy.

As for the weekends, we are in the heart of USTA Adult league season. Matches are played on Saturdays and Sundays from 11 to about 6 p.m.. These times are not always taken, and leagues only use 3 courts (4, 5 & 6), so check the court scheduler and club calendar for court availability. There are always a couple of courts available for open play, even when there are matches, but you will probably need to make a reservation.

close enough to volley, and far enough back to have a shot at running down a lob, and hitting an overhead. Sounds pretty good. Good enough that this basic Classic formation dominated tennis for close to a hundred years.

The problem is, no one is really covering the middle. In the past, players would rely on their mobility to move and cover the middle, as well as move back on the lob. As strokes developed, and tennis became more and more of a power game, a hard shot through the middle really gave the Classic formation a rough time (there isn't enough time to move around). One or both opponents staying back against a Classic team and ripping groundstrokes up the middle becomes very hard to beat using a classic defense. And at the Club level, unless you are 22 and really fast, the Classic formation doesn't really cover the lob very well either. This led to a lot of Club players playing with one player in zone 2 and the other player (server or returner) hanging out in 4 or 5. One up, one back, the bane of your local pro for years, who was always haranguing his students to come in "like real players."

Now, the modern style ground-stroking players have taken control of the middle of the net, by hitting from the baseline! Net players around the world (including me), couldn't believe this was happening. How could these club-swinging Neanderthals be beating us? Not only did big groundstrokes dominate singles, which we were forced to admit many years ago, but now they were conquering doubles too. The world seemed terribly unfair, yet truth be told, we just couldn't handle the pace plus the space from zone two in Classic formation.

What to do? First we complained, and called them dirty names. We would say, "They don't know how to play real doubles." You still hear this on TV from commentators from time to time. The problem was that when you went out on the court, thought they didn't know how to play real doubles, they were beating us. Talk about eating major crow.

The **temptation** egged us to move back to the baseline with our partners, but we were much better volleyers than groundstrokers, so that seemed like suicide. The situation looked bad, and we feared deep down inside that net play would go the way of the dinosaurs. Some of us volleyers, not quite ready to toss in the towel, started to experiment around, and found that we could handle the incredible pace and spin (oh, let's not forget the spin, tons of it with modern strokes) of these forehands and backhands by moving closer to the net (this was not the first thought that came to mind, to move right into the path of these huge shots, let me tell you). Close to the net, in zone one, we have very little time to react, but hey, we're net players (fast reflexes, good hands, all that). The place we had found we really didn't want to be was in zone two or zone three (no man's land). Or, in other words, where serve and volleyers hit their first volley.

Boss From The Net: playing close to the net, in **zone one**, gave us a better angle to intercept balls being hit from the baseline (zone five). Covering **window #2** allowed us to get back in control of the match, from the net, where control belonged, after all. Any good doubles player knew that, didn't they?

Being close to the net also gave us a shot at balls hit through window #1 as well, especially as we learned, if we forced those Cro-Magnon baseliners to hit from the middle of the baseline. So then the baseliners might be forced to lob. Of course, we weren't out of the woods yet, because the lob would be a killer with us so close to the net, if our partner was coming in. So we compromised, and left our partner back to cover the lob.

So **modern doubles** was born. One player in zone one, one player in zone five. One player basically covering the front of the court, one person covering the back. But this isn't your grandma's "one up and one back," where the net

Fig. 1

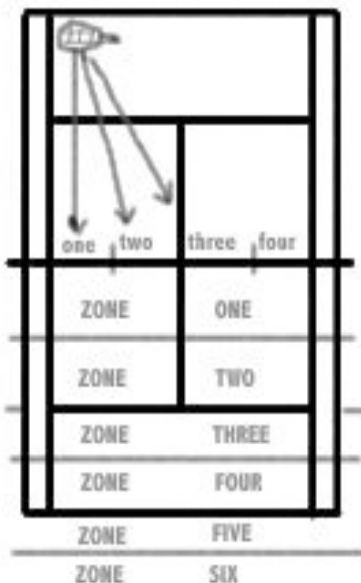
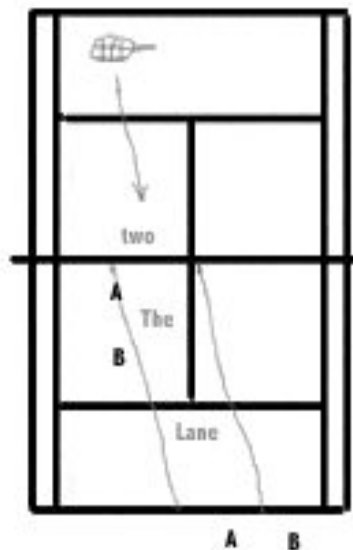


Fig. 2



Quote of the Month:

"All Warfare Is Based On Deception."

-- Sun Tzu
Art of War



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player hangs out in zone two trying to help with the lob. Strategically, the game had rotated 90 degrees, from side to side to up and back. Pro teams play a lot of stack, Australian, or I formation (all variations on this idea).

In Modern doubles, **players have rules** (as opposed to classic, where there were team rules). The net player was responsible for being in zone one, and covering primarily window #2, secondarily window #1. The net player has **no** responsibility for lobs. He doesn't care what the back person is doing behind him (up or back), the net player just has to do his job. The back player's job is defense, and to cover the back part of the court, including lobs over the net player's head. The back player is almost playing a modified game of singles. If the net person doesn't hit it, it's mine (including, amazingly some times, shots that pass the net person in the alley, if you are quick enough).

Serve and Volley: But what about us old serve and volleyers? We're fine when we are up front, but what about when we are in the back serving or receiving. Do we stay back and attempt to rip groundies with the big boomers, not exactly our skill set. Well, modern doubles does have a serve and volley component, but you have to remember the player rules. The net player has the middle, up close, and the back player has to cover the back. So the server or returner can move forward into zone three. In order for this to work, the net player has to cover shots through window #2 so that the hard ball will not get to the back player's feet in zone 3 (that would be a disaster). And the back player in zone three still needs to cover all the lobs (hopefully with overheads). For a righthander, it is much easier to come in on the ad-court side than the deuce side (because you are covering the open side of the court on the ad-side with your forehand).

Formations: In modern doubles, you can play one/three or one/five. And the final option: five/five (both back) against teams that serve very well, or a net player that completely controls the middle. Five/five is also a good way to play if the returner is having trouble controlling the return (and hitting to the net person).

Positioning is only part of modern doubles. **Where you hit** the ball is just as important. It is much easier to be in the middle (in zone one) as a net person if you play your shots to places where the opponent is going to have to hit the ball back in the middle. That means directing your shots to the middle a lot, or out wide on the ad-court side to the opponent's backhand (down the line backhands being quite tough to hit).

What you need to know: Are they covering the lane? Look across the net (maybe a novel idea, at least for some players). **The lane** (see figure #2) is basically where the ball goes if the ball goes through window #2. A net player in zone one, close the net (A), is covering the lane. A net player in zone two (B), is basically not covering the lane. The baseline player is in a much stronger position at A than at B. A/A (one/five) would be a modern formation, B/B (two/five – covering the wide shot) a classic one.

As a **net player**, you want to be in zone one and covering the lane (A). As a **backcourt player**, you want to hit the ball in your opponent's lane. This is another way of asking, which team is controlling the middle?

The net person has the first crack here, they can just move up (zone one) and cover the lane (window #2). Sounds easy, how come almost no one does it? (hint: they forget "It's the middle, stupid.").

As for the **back player**, you may have to get to hitting through the middle by moving the net person out of it (if they are smart enough to be in zone one, covering window #2). Moving the net person involves smoke and mirrors, and the height of deception. Call it a bluff, in poker terms. Or in other words, you have to convince them that you could actually win the match by hitting hundreds of alley shots and lobs (of course we know you can't, but we don't have to tell them that). When they move out of the middle to cover either the alley (window #1) or the lob (zone two or three), then they have forgotten "It's the middle, stupid" and you can go back to hitting the ball right down the lane (hopefully it will look the size of a freeway at this point). Maybe you get really lucky, and they will try to cover both the alley and the lob. That would be really great!!!!

Advantages: So Modern doubles has a real advantage over Classic doubles because Modern doubles covers the middle much better. It allows players to volley in zone one, which is the easiest place to volley, and hit groundstrokes in zone five, the easiest place to

hit forehands and backhands (and of course, lob). It avoids having to play many shots from the middle of the court (2 & 3), which is the hardest place to hit, except for overheads.

Focus & Mental Control: Lots of things happen in a match. A couple of winners here, a double fault, you miss an easy shot, they hook you on a line call, the sun is in a bad spot, it is windy, your partner is a jerk, or doesn't play the way you like, you're about to win, you're about to lose, you hate match tie-breakers, and on and on and on. The distractions are endless, and only limited by your rich imagination. But control those thoughts, allow them to hit improbable winners, tame you imagination, keep coming back to: "It's the middle, stupid."

"It's the Middle..." If they hit a winner down the alley, they made a great shot. Good for them. If they hit ball after ball up the lane (window #2) and you are not there to stop it, you're a fool. Don't worry, you have lots of company, but how about next time, you make them play great to beat you, instead of just handing them the middle of the court where it is easiest to hit and hardest to miss. Make them play, rather than play you for the fool.

2012 Orindawoods Summer Junior Tennis Program

Welcome to the 2012 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 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 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 of our classes for an additional fee.

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 the 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 Ten-and-Under Tennis 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 to sign up early.

Weekly Camp Line Up

OW Camp	Ages	Days	Time	Cost per Week Member / Nonmember
Full Camp				
Afternoon Camp	Ages 7-16	Monday – Thursday	12noon-3:45pm	\$185/\$210
Half Camps				
Instruction Block	Ages 7-16	Monday – Thursday	12noon-2:00pm	\$120/\$135
Match Play Block	Ages 7-16	Monday – Thursday	2:15-3:45pm	\$95/\$110
Lil' Ones Camp	Ages 4-6	Tuesday & Thursday	4:00-4:45pm	\$35/\$40

Summer Sessions

Each week features the camp line-up shown above. We will offer the following weeks for camps this summer:

Session 1	June 11-14	Full Camp, Instruction Block, Match Play Block, Lil' Ones
Session 2	June 18-21	Full Camp, Instruction Block, Match Play Block, Lil' Ones
Session 3	June 25-28	Full Camp, Instruction Block, Match Play Block, Lil' Ones
Session 4	July 2-5 (no classes on Wednesday July 4, price will be pro rated for this week)	
Session 5	July 9-12	Full Camp, Instruction Block, Match Play Block, Lil' Ones
Session 6	July 16-19	Full Camp, Instruction Block, Match Play Block, Lil' Ones
Session 7	July 23-26	Full Camp, Instruction Block, Match Play Block, Lil' Ones
Session 8	July 30-Aug. 2	Full Camp, Instruction Block, Match Play Block, Lil' Ones

Registration

To register, pick up a form at the Club, download a form from the Club website's junior page or e-mail Head Pro Patric Hermanson (patrictennis@yahoo.com). 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.

