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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

The News

Fit And Hit: Anna Marie has started a Tennis Fitness Clinic ("Fit and Hit"). Fit and Hit involves rapid-fire drills on the ball machine as well as a fitness and strength component using the TRX exercise system. These classes are fun, great exercise and good for your tennis all at the same time. Summer is coming, and it is time to get in shape. Join Anna Marie for these workouts!

Class Schedule:

Day	Time	Cost
Saturday	8 – 9 a.m.	\$15/class
Wednesday	11:30 a.m. – 12:30 pm	\$15/class

The Saturday morning clinic will run year around, while the Wednesday clinic will be offered during the school year. To register go to the Club Calendar on our website and click on the class you wish to attend. Take up the challenge, get fit with Anna Marie!

Court Resurfacing: We are resurfacing 6 of the 7 courts at the Club during the first week of June. Court availability will be greatly reduced and somewhat unpredictable at that time. Bear with us. At the end of a week of inconvenience, we will have six wonderful new courts! I will get more details of court closures to you as the time approaches.

Guests and Guest Fees: Just a brief word about guests here at Orindawoods. Guests are for the members, and it is a privilege of membership to be able to bring guests. Occasionally we like to play with our friends, who for some reason are not able to belong to our wonderful Club. Members who have guests are responsible for collecting the \$5 guest fee and putting it in the Pro Shop mail slot. The guest program is not so someone who is not a member can play here whenever they want, and just pay \$5 to "drop-in", and not join the Club. If the guest is not benefitting our members, we're not interested in them playing here. In general, no one person (guest) should be here more than one day per week. If a member thinks there should be an exception to this, it needs to be OK-ed through Keith.

Our club is based on personal responsibility. We love Orindawoods, we support it through our dues, and we respect each other by insisting that our guests are not only welcomed and made to feel at home, but that they follow the rules and policies of the Club (designed to support the members). We have no front desk controlling the entrance, or ten-foot high fence protecting the property, and no security force patrolling the grounds to make sure the rules are enforced. The Club works because each and every member supports and takes care of the Club themselves. Thank you, you're the best! Let's keep Orindawoods the best!

Tennis Tip:

What the Pushers Get (and What They Don't Get)

Pushers. Steady Eddy's. Mr. & Mrs. Consistency.

We've all played them. And, if you catch us in an honest moment and we are willing to admit it, we've all resorted to their tactics and often been filled with shame and regret afterwards, even out-and-out guilt. We shirk from our friends and teammates. Either that, or we are shunned.

Pushing: block the ball, get it back in, let the other player make the mistake. There was a pusher in my club growing up. Bob the Lob. The guy never missed. The guy never hit the ball hard, like a real man. And he knew it, and

The Details

Monday Team Tennis: Yes! It is time for Monday Night Team Tennis! We will be starting the first week of May. We plan to play each Monday evening. That means that NOW is time to register for MTT. The best way to sign up is to let Keith know (orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net). The cost will be \$50 for members, \$70 for non-members for a summer full of Monday-evening social tennis. Join us and enjoy!

Ace It! Our Ace It! Breast Cancer Awareness Day is Saturday, June 22. Registration begins this month. For more information, and to download an application, go to the Ace It! page on the Orindawoods tennis website (www.orindawoodstennis.com). As always, Ace It! will consist of our Tour of Pros clinics with local teaching pros in the morning, the Ace It! Luncheon on the deck, and the Ace It! Tournament in the afternoon. Come join us for a great day of friendship and support in the fight against Breast Cancer.

Court Washing: Court washing takes place on the first and last Fridays of the month from 11 – 3 p.m.. We wash 3-4 courts at a time, so if you like to play at this time, be sure you check the schedule and make a reservation on a court not being washed. We do court washing from April through the beginning of November, then we subcontract the job to Mother Nature for the winter months.

Pool Opens May 3: Need I say more? Get ready for a great summer of poolside fun! The pool is open from dawn to dusk, 7 days a week. Enjoy, starting in early May!

Parking: I know you all want a spot in our choice, beautiful, dedicated parking lot, conveniently located right off the entrance to the club. But darn, sometimes it is full. Please, in this case, park across the street on lower Greystone Terrace. Creative parking (in front of the dumpster or at the end of the lot) blocks traffic and can be dangerous. Let's stay safe!

he loved it. LOVED IT. He relished letting you know that his dinky little game could beat your real man game, any day of the week, on any court in town. The guy had more trophies than the Yankees. And the guy had no shame, at least on the outside (he was probably racked with guilt as he drank ALONE late at night at the corner bar – I'd be surprised if the barkeep even talked to him). But I digress.

Half the Game: Pushers do get some of the most important elements of the game correct. First of all, they almost always make good contact. They hit the ball right in the middle of the racquet. How can you not make good contact when you are going that slowly! To make good contact, they know they have to move. So they have good footwork too. Damn them! And they understand that tennis is largely a game of errors, and more specifically, not making them. And they get gravity. What goes up, must come down. Hit it softly up over the net (yes, over the net, we must hit the ball up over the net in tennis), and it will fall down inside the lines on the other side.

The Other Half: So they have at least half the game down: getting the ball in. What they will admit (in a rare, honest, guilt and shame ridden moment – probably in a confessional to their priest or psychiatrist), is that they can't really force the opponent into making errors nor can they hit winners themselves. They just have to wait, often a long time (a very long time if two pushers play each other), for the other person to miss a shot they can really make. And this, of course, is one reason why it is so tough to play a pusher. The matches are very long, and basically based on errors (based on failures, not successes -- and too often ours, or at least it seems that way). Looking at it that way, it is an inherently depressing way to play. As the errors pile up, you feel worse and worse.

But again, I digress. The pushers are missing the attacking part of the game, by their own admission. But they are also missing more than that, and here is the window of opportunity for us all to grow (can a pusher, a person of such low moral fiber and social standing, grow?). Let me explain.

Leverage & Timing (Tools and Fools): When you push the ball, you are essentially using leverage. The racquet isn't moving very much, so it is easy to make contact. In fact it is a lot like catching the ball. Catching is far easier than hitting, since when you are catching, basically, only the ball is moving. When you are hitting, both the ball and the racquet (bat, club, paddle, etc... in other sports) is moving. Timing is very difficult when you are hitting. Two moving objects, plus in tennis, you also have to move to get to the ball (as opposed to baseball where the ball had to be pitched to you, in an area where it is possible to hit it – the strike zone).

If a player says they are having trouble with their timing, you know they are hitting the ball. Pushers almost never say they are having trouble with their timing, because they are essentially catching the ball, not swinging at it.

But pushers do more than just catch, they push. They use leverage, mostly from their body weight, to direct the ball up in the air (over the net) and where they want the ball to go (in the court – to your weakest shot if they are good enough). They are not moving the racquet very much, so they still get good contact on the ball, but they are applying force to return the ball back over the net with leverage, or pushing. And thus their infamous title was born (to be loathed by the rest of civilized humanity).

Because timing is difficult in tennis, probably the most difficult thing, and Pushers don't want to miss, they don't swing, they make contact and they push (thus they minimize the effects of timing). There is something about this that is really smart (yes, damn it, pushers are usually very smart folks – subhumans, but smart).

If you like winning, I would read the sentence in italics again (a few thousand times), because this is what pushers have right. They don't swing, they don't base their game on timing. Timing is a trap, fool's gold, the sucker play. In fact, it has gotten to the point in my understanding, that if I overhear someone say that their timing is off, it probably means they are not a very good player, and are not really using modern stroking techniques. Ouch, that hurts. Perhaps the "not a good player" part is a bit harsh. More accurately, if someone is struggling with timing, that means that they are employing a more difficult way to play, which requires them to be a much more practiced and coordinated player. Who doesn't have a bad timing day? And that is the point. We need to get away from timing as the essential element of playing. And pushers don't time. They don't have time for it; they are too busy winning.

What's Missing? But as we have pointed out, pushers are missing the offense in their shots. They can't hit hard, they can't attack, all they can do is attempt to drive their opponent crazy. And if their opponent refuses to go crazy, and keeps making good shots, the pusher has no real choice but to lose, and lose painfully -- a torturous, slow death -- because they feel powerless. I know, who among us is going to feel too sorry for these aforementioned bottom feeders. But if we can step back a bit, and deep down inside call on our most spiritual and enlightened beings,

maybe some day, after about twenty years of recovery, therapy and memory loss, we can, perhaps, see this for the tragedy that it really is, a failure of the human spirit.

So Far: We see that pushers don't swing, and they don't have power. So do they need to swing to get power? Get some momentum going to produce a more powerful shot? "For every situation in life, there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong." We've hit on that wrong answer here. For if they swing, then they won't be able to avoid timing. And then they are back in the leaky lifeboat, bailing water with the rest of us, in the shark-infested waters of competition (and survival of the fittest). Seems like a vicious circle.

Quote of the Month:

"On the other side of fear is everything you want."

-- unknown



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So there are pushers (lowlifes), and hitters (real players – yet losers). Or phrased another way, we have pushing and swinging. Could there be a third way? Is there a way to attack without resorting to swinging and its accompanying timing problems?

Pushers are smart. They don't want to miss. They understand that tennis, and especially singles, is about keeping your unforced errors down. If you make fewer errors than your opponent, you usually win. But what they don't realize is that they are selling themselves short, and not just in the obvious power category. They are selling themselves short in the control category as well (maybe they are not as smart as they look – ahhhh – my jealousy and bitterness rears its ugly head).

Think about this. Pushers are using gravity to make the ball drop back into the court, but they largely overlook aerodynamics. Yes, there is some air resistance that helps slow the ball down and allows gravity to pull the ball down, but that is it for aerodynamics on a ball that doesn't have much spin. Pushing (leverage) doesn't apply much spin. Of course hitters (real players) are largely overlooking aerodynamics as well, as when you hit, strike or slap a ball, it is hard to put much spin on it either. Here we are again, stuck between the lousy choice, power (hitting) or control (pushing). One or the other.

And Then There Was Spin: Spin alters the flight path of a ball. Underspin makes the ball go up, or hang in the air (a favorite for homerun hitters in baseball and hitting off the tee in golf), and topspin makes the ball rise at first, and then drop back down to earth (over the net, into the court – perfect for tennis). If I feel weak, or need a ball to travel a long way, I can use underspin to make it rise. If I instead want the ball to drop, I can apply topspin. Gravity plus topspin equal what I call super gravity. This is what the pusher is missing. They are just using gravity to get the ball in, but there is a better way, gravity plus topspin. So pushers, who base their game completely on consistency, are actually not playing the most consistent way, and are selling themselves short on maximizing their strategy of not missing. Borg is the first to really use this, though it is often overlooked that Rod Laver used a lot of spin as well for his day (and he won everything – twice).

Hitters are missing out too, because even though they attack and hit the ball harder, their faster ball is cutting through the air at higher speeds than the pushers, and thus overcomes the power of gravity for a longer time (and therefore, often goes long, over the baseline – or crashes into the net because they are trying to keep it so low that it doesn't sail long when they hit it hard – i.e. they're losers).

This is not to say that hitters don't impart spin on the ball, they do. Just not enough, or not as much as they can.

The Classic Impasse: For years, tennis was at this impasse: you either hit for power, or pushed for control. Of course there were gradations in between, and players would borrow a bit from one camp or the other. This is no longer the case.

The most consistent player in the world is Rafael Nadal. He is also one of the most powerful players. Rafa is no pusher. And yet, Rafa does push. Rafa uses leverage. Rafa doesn't hit, swat, slap, spank, whack or strike the ball. And Rafa hits more spin than anyone ever has in tennis. He uses super gravity. Rafa drives the ball (uses leverage, or push), but he adds torque (turning). His contact with the ball is a push, plus a turn (torque). The torque adds spin, but it also adds speed. Zoom.

In the modern game, control and power go together. The most powerful players (Rafa, Federer, Djokovic, Murray) also have the most control. The faster their racquet goes, the more spin they put on the ball (as well as power). They catch the ball on their strings, drive it forward (leverage, push), as they turn (torque) the racquet which imparts spin on the ball. The racquet moves much faster when it is turning, and this racquet head speed goes both into spin and speed. This is why the game is faster today than ever before.

The Wind Up, Old School / New School: When you hit a ball, you swing at it. You build up as much speed as you can, and the momentum of the swing crashes into the ball and sends it flying. The problem is, as we've discussed, making contact with coordination and timing. When an object is traveling fast, it is very hard to change course (think Titanic vs. iceberg here). It has momentum, and it is difficult to adjust its course, or time connection with another object (especially another object that is moving). The pusher solves this problem by not swinging, but they have no speed, and speed is necessary for both power and spin. In modern tennis, instead of taking a backswing, which leads to a

forward swing, and a loss of control (due to momentum), the players of today wind up. That is, they twist their arms and bodies so that when they catch the ball on their strings, they can both drive (push, shove) the ball, and turn (roll) the ball. The speed comes from the fact that you can internally (or externally) rotate your shoulder much faster than you could ever swing your arm in your shoulder joint (plus you hurt yourself when you swing your arm, rotating is natural).

The hardest thing I have found in transitioning from being an old style hitter (loser) to a modern player (a pusher crusher), is the approach to the ball. When hitting, we keep the racquet too far back, wait way too long, and swing forward way too fast. There is far too much momentum for our own good. Or as they say in aviation, when landing a plane, the plane (racquet) is coming in way too hot (engines powered up). Try this:

A Practice Drill: When hitting from the baseline, imagine that you are doing a short court rally up at the service line. You have to stroke very easily in short court to avoid returning the ball too hard for your partner. You approach the ball very slowly, reaching out for the ball as if to catch it. When the ball arrives, drive (push) forward with the right side of your body (on a right-handed forehand), and rotate your arm (your elbow goes out away from your body, up and rolls over). The first half of this motion is very much like what you would do if you were catching a ball (but you have to wind your body and arm too). You move your body to the ball, and reach forward to catch it. The second half of the motion, where you unleash the stored energy by unwinding, is where the torque and thus speed is. This second part should feel fairly easy as well. Speed comes not from effort, but from your arm turning in the shoulder joint. The racquet goes fast with very little effort (ever wonder why good players don't look like they are working very hard when they crush the ball).

If you are a pusher (can't believe I'm even addressing these people), the transition is easier. Yes, physically it is easier for a pusher to become a modern player than a hitter (real player). The pusher already has the footwork, and catch of the ball. They don't swing, which is more than half the battle. They have to ad the winding up, and the turning (torque) at contact. Now psychologically, this may be very, very difficult, because the pusher's most basic idea (right after "I love to win, I love to win, I love to win"), is that "slow is control," and that is only half correct. A slow windup is good (catch), a slow contact (no turn) is bad. And the pushers approach is basically negative, "don't miss", and their world is a world of errors, and error avoidance, rather than positive, "what can I create, or become." Their one hope (of casting aside the plague of pushing, and emerging as worthy human beings whom the rest of us might actually choose to play with at a social occasion) is that "more spin means more win", and no pusher, in their soul-searching, heart of hearts, would ever want to pass that opportunity by. If they can just overcome their fear of speed (see quote of the month). A big if, and big ask. But worthy of the journey every time. At least you won't drink alone, after a loss, or a win.

The Quote: There isn't a single top player today that doesn't play with push and turn. A player using super gravity is steadier than the pusher, who is stuck with only gravity. "When a match gets tight, I go for it more." (attributed to Rod Laver, Monica Seles, countless other champions). While a pusher slows it down for control, and a hitter takes crazy risks, the modern player (push and turn) increases their consistency by creating more racquet head speed (leverage and torque) and thus plays more safely, while still being able to attack with relative comfort and ease. Modern players crush pushers (isn't that satisfying – repeat that a few times!), because they not only stoke the ball harder, but they are even steadier.. Good luck out there (even to the pushers who see the error of their ways and switch to the modern game)! We'll take you back, like the Prodigal Son.

OWTC Summer Junior Tennis Program 6/10-8/1:

Welcome to the 2013 Orindawoods Summer Junior Tennis Program. Below is listed our weekly schedule and pricing. For more information, contact Head Pro Patric Hermanson (patrictennis@yahoo.com).

Orindawoods Camps	Ages	Days	Time	Cost/week Member/Non-member
Full Camp				
Afternoon Camp	ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	12noon-3:45pm	\$185 / \$210
Half Camps				
Instruction block	ages 7-16	Monday-Thursday	12noon-2pm	\$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

Camp Schedule:

Session 1	June 10-13	Session 5	July 8-11
Session 2	June 17-20	Session 6	July 15-18
Session 3	June 24-27	Session 7	July 22-25
Session 4	July 1-3*	Session 8	July 29-Aug 1

* No class on Thursday July 4th to celebrate our Nation's B-day. We'll pro rate the price that week.