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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

Twilight Success

Thanks to all of you who participated in our Twilight Tennis BBQs this summer! What fun, what a success! Each Twilight featured over 40 participants, and our last Twilight, on October 11, had almost 60 people attend. That is a lot of filet mignon. Hope you got one. If you didn't, Twilight Tennis BBQs will be back next year, starting in July. What fun!

OW Junior Championships

The Orindawoods Junior Championships are being held October 23-25. On Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday, all the courts at the Club will be used. There may be some open court time late on Sunday, depending on the weather. Check with Keith or Patric at the Pro Shop during the weekend. **THERE WILL BE NO RESERVATIONS THE OCTOBER 24-25 WEEKEND.**

Developing junior tennis and junior tennis players is an important part of the game, and the future of Orindawoods. Once a year we all donate our court time for this USPTA junior event. Thanks to you, all the members, for supporting junior tennis!

Reindeer Games

Will it rain, will it not rain? It seems to be the question on everyone's mind. Will El Niño be El Nada Grande? Fortunately, we have scheduled the "Rain-o-dear" Games, so it we know it will rain at least one day (for a few hours anyway) this winter.

Actually, with the last couple of dry years, I think we have made it to over 50% of the Reindeer Games NOT being washed away. Let's see what this year holds for us. So on **Sunday, December 13th, from 12 to 3 p.m.** will be the annual Reindeer Games at Orindawoods. The cost, as always, is FREE. We will play "mix and match" doubles, followed by good cheer on the club deck. Happy Holidays (already????)! Join us!

Tennis Tip:

Playing Doubles: Serving Plus One & Returning

The serve is the most important shot in tennis. There is a serve on every single point. Sometimes there is only a serve (ace or double fault). **The serve / return exchange dictates most of what follows.** Who wins, who loses most of the time.

If you really want to improve your game, work on your serve (and then your return). Effective serves are a combination of the four weapons: power, placement, spin and deception. It's best to have a mix of those, rather than be outstanding at one and average to poor at the others. In doubles, a medium speed serve, placed in the right spot consistently, with decent spin, and a deceptive motion (you could go elsewhere, and do from time to time), is much more effective than a blaster that goes in only half the time. You want to make about 67-70% first serves in doubles. Start practicing!

Since most points in doubles only last 0-4 shots, how that exchange starts is very important. It is important to remember that the serve, while it can be powerful, is a back court shot. Our job when we are hitting from the back, is to 1) play defense, and 2) set the net player up. Somewhere around 75-80% of the points in doubles end in either a winner or a forced error. And the winning ratio from the back is poor. If the last shot is hit from the baseline, it is 20% winners and 80% errors, while if the last shot is taken from the net, it is reverse: 80% winners, and 20% errors. Taken further, specific to serving, the team with the most aces usually loses.

So in doubles, we want to get a high percentage of serves in, and we want to set our partner up, or force an error from the returner.

Set Up The Net Person. As the server, your primary job is to get the returner to hit the ball back to your partner, where they can end the point. Miramonte HS Head Coach Michael

Important Housekeeping

We need to keep our house clean, and running in good order, so here are a couple of simple, but important things you can do to keep Orindawoods wonderful.

1. **Cancel reservations** that you aren't going to use. Don't let courts just sit.

2. No back-to-back reservations. Share.

3. Put your Name on the **Green Sign** in board, even if you have a reservation.

4. **DON'T TAKE THE BALL MACHINE REMOTE HOME**, If you do, bring it back. (we all make mistakes, make corrections too).

5. **Friendly Bumping.** When it is time for your reservation, go down to the court, wait outside the fence. Let the people playing know it is your turn, and then let them finish the game they are playing, no ad (no tiebreaks).

6. Treat all members (even that jerk) the way that you would want to be treated. **Respect.**

The Pool Is Closing

Well, it may still seem like summer, but it is time to close the Tennis Club pool for the season. We left it open an extra week to take advantage of the "quality rays" we are having this October. We will close on October 25th.

McCormack says that **doubles is about sharing: you hit a shot (the serve or the return) then your partner hits a shot (volley)**. Take turns, no one should be hitting all the shots. It's a good way to look at it. If the returner misses the return trying to avoid the net person, fine. What you are looking for is a predictable return to your partner. On the deuce side, that's easy: hit the first serve down the middle (to a right-hander's backhand, #4, fig. 1). A high percentage of the returns should come back through the middle, where your partner should be waiting. If your partner doesn't understand this ("cover the alley"), start thinking of something nice to say to your opponents when you shake hands after loosing. The ad side is trickier. The middle serve sets up the best angles (#5, ball back through the middle), but it is a right-hander's forehand. The serve out wide to the backhand (#8) almost always is returned cross court (predictable), but it is harder to pick off for the net person since the ball is angling away from the volleyer. The jam can work (#6 or #7), but it also allows the possibility of the returner running around and hitting a forehand, from a more dangerous position than when the serve is up the middle (#5) to the forehand. So the answer here is mix it up. Probably 60% to the backhand (#8), and 20% each to the other two (#7 & #5). If you sever to #6 (FH wheel house), you better go big or go home.

And If The Ball Comes Back To the Server? If the returner succeeds in avoiding the net person on a first serve, one of two things is most likely to happen: they hit an angled crosscourt return or they lob.

1. **They Return Crosscourt.** Most returners look to avoid the net person. If they accomplish that, they feel the job is done. Your job is to remind them, it isn't. Since the return is angled away from the net person, it almost always lands somewhat short (fig. 4, **zone 3**). The return that is most likely to go deep (to zone 4) goes through the middle, and your net person should be getting those. The mistake most servers make is that they don't anticipate this short

response (**ball that lands in zone 3, should be hit from zone 4, fig. 2&3**).

Servers need to **step up into the court** where they can attack this ball. Because if the ball is in front of them (if they didn't move up), servers fear hitting the ball long, and basically push it back to the returner. In the best-case scenario, the returner pushes it back (cross court to avoid the server's net person) and we have a crosscourt rally. In the worst-case scenario, the returner steps up (to zone 4) and does what the server should have done, attack this weak ball. Since most doubles points last 0-4 shots, this shot, shot #3 by the serving team, is probably the last one you're going to get. Capitalize!

2. The key is to **get up next to the ball**. If you are next to the ball, you can drive it, hit it down the line (A), still make the cross court shot (B,C&D), etc. In other words, you still have all four weapons: time, placement, spin and deception. If the ball is in front of you, you lose almost all your weapons, except the ability to place the ball crosscourt.

3. Remember, only 20-25% of the points in doubles end in an unforced error (40% winners 35-40% forced errors). **Just getting the ball back is a dumb play**, unless you are really under immense pressure (returning a tough first serve, for example, or an overhead). As Thomas Hobbes said, "Life [of a doubles point] is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." (something like that, perhaps I paraphrase...). If you

Fig. 1

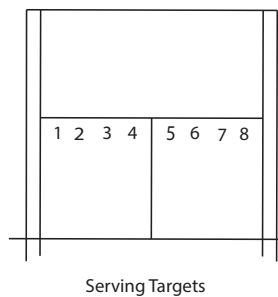


Fig. 2

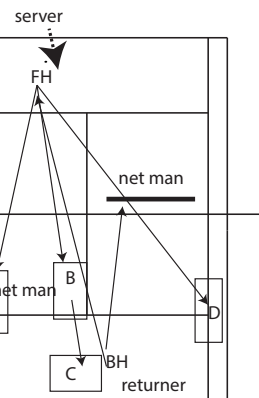
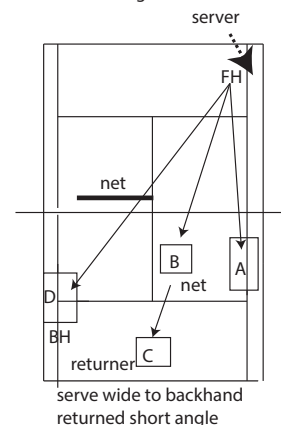


Fig. 3

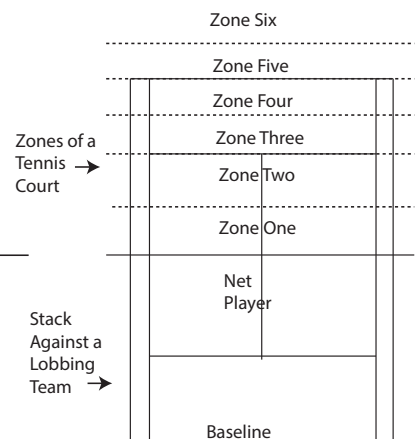


Fig. 4



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have an opportunity, take it. Doubles is a dog-eat-dog world. Or as Hobbs would say, a jungle.

4. Now **going for a winner is also a bit on the dumb side** (only 20% of the groundstroke shots that end a point are winners, 80% errors), but don't make the opposite / companion mistake of playing it safe. **Press your opponent** by hitting the ball to one of the four target areas (A, B, C or D). The B/C axis is the best, because it is the safest shot, and it pressures the net player (if they want it at B) or the returner (at C), if the net player doesn't take it. Both set up your net player as well (ball to the middle will be returned to the middle). A shot to "A" must be played occasionally to open up B/C. Play D occasionally if the server is cheating to cover C. A and D involve much more risk (hitting closer to the lines, sometimes over the higher part of the net), but will result in more winners. Go easy here. **Good rule of thumb:** it is much easier on a day-to-day basis to pressure your opponent than it is to play great (and hit a ton of winners).

5. In terms of strategy, it is good to have a **primary plan, and a secondary plan**. You do the primary plan 7-8 times out of 10, the secondary plan 2-3 times out of 10. Here the primary is to hit through the middle B/C. The secondary plan is probably A. The secondary plan is a diversion, **on big points, always play plan A**. (Or as they say in the South, "Dance with the one who brought you").

6. But again, the key is the ability to move into the court (get into zone 4, fig. 2&3) and hit short balls. So you have another skill to practice, **stepping up and hitting short balls with intent and anger**. This shot is similar to the return of the second serve (fig. 5&6, except when you serve, you have to move up on this one from zone 5 to zone 4). If you practice hitting from zone 4, and then add the moving up, you get both skills.

7. **Returning Second Serves.** (fig. 5&6). This is the other huge moment of opportunity in tennis (serving + the next shot, being the first). Most second serves go to #3 or #7 (figure 1). Stand directly behind these areas in zone 4, and step around any serve and hit a forehand to the same four target areas (B/C primary, A secondary) as the server was hitting after the short angled return. Only strong serves to #4 & #8 are backhands.

8. **Don't Stand Where It Lands.** (fig. 4) If we look at the six zones of the court, to be effective, you want to stand in a zone either in front or behind where the ball is landing. In this scenario where the returns of first serves are landing in zone 3 mostly, you either want to hit the ball in zone one (your net man) or from zone 4 (fig. 2&3). This is another vote against serve and volley, which has you run up to zone 3, where the ball is landing, and you will have to volley or half volley the ball up. From zone 1 you can hit it down, and from zone 4, you can drive it. As a server, you have a huge advantage (fig. 2&3).

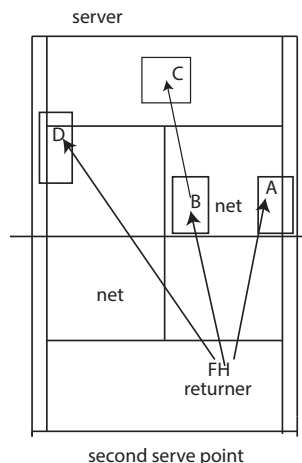


Fig. 5

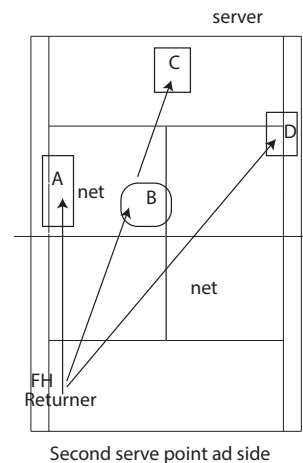


Fig. 6

The receiver's partner is off the net. When you hit the ball from zone 4 to B/C, you can hit it to the feet of the net person, B, or the feet of the returner, C.

9. **They Lob.** The lob usually comes into play on the deuce court (when you have hit a serve down the middle, target #4 on fig. 1, to the backhand). The better the serve (combination of the four weapons), the harder it is to lob. Pace and spin make lobbing problematic (hit the practice courts). If they can lob, anticipate. A player that lobs off the backhand often does it repeatedly. The tricky part is that if the ball is lobbed, it goes to your backhand corner. If it is a good lob, lob it back and go into stack formation (fig. 4). From there, run the bounce-overhead play (see below). If the lob is high and short, and you anticipate, you can hit a bounce-overhead right away.

10. **Lobbers Fear Overheads.** Or I should say, their partners fear overheads. The lob / overhead game is about intimidation. Hit overheads, scare them. Even if you miss. Start practicing! Be scary! (It's Halloween, after all).

11. **The Stack, and the Bounce-overhead Play.** (positioning: bottom half of fig. 4) When a lobbing war begins (and they are lobbing from zones 5 or 6, behind the baseline), you want to shift your formation to a stack (net player in the middle, close the net, back player in the middle of the court, shading a bit to the backhand side). If your lob is returned short (a drive or weak lob to zones 1 or 2), the net player takes the ball. If the lob is returned medium deep (landing so you can hit from zone 3 or 4), the back player hits a bounce overhead (back to the middle of the court). If the lob is returned with a good lob (you have to hit it behind the baseline, zones 5 or 6), lob the ball back and start again, looking for the short or medium lobs. If they just lob, and your team is willing to hit overheads when they lob short (and lob back when it is deep), you are in a much stronger position. Remember, it's much easier to hit a overhead off a lob, than it is to hit a lob off an overhead. Claim your advantage!

Fall Junior Tennis At Orindawoods **August 31st – December 11th**

The 2015 Fall Junior Program Clinics began the week of August 31st and will continue thru the week of December 7th. There are no classes the week of November 23-27. The 14-week program will be run by Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa. Little Ones and Future Stars will be taught using aspects of the USTA 10 and under Development Program. There is still room in some classes (we will pro-rate the price).

Orindawoods Clinics	Ages	Days	Time	Cost Per Week One day / Two days
Little Ones	Ages 4-6	Tues and/or Thurs	3:15-4pm	\$160 / \$260
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.				
Future Stars	Ages 7-10	Tuesdays	4-5:30pm	\$320/ n/a
The Future Stars Group is for our 7 to 10 year old players. The players will be working with 10 and under balls on 36', 60' and full courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games, and match play are all part of the curriculum as we work our way up to the green dot balls and the full court.				
Tennis Development	Ages 11-14	Thursday	4-5:30pm	\$320/ n/a
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 ages 11 thru 14.				
Tournament Training Invitation Only		Wednesdays	4:30-6:30pm	\$410 / n/a
The Tournament Training Group is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.				

Non-members should at \$25 (Lil' Ones, only \$15).

Pricing: We have factored into the cost of the clinics, the potential of two weeks of missed classes due to rain, illness, vacations, etc...

Special Discount: 10% discount off the cost of the 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, or look on orindawoodstennis.com at the bottom of the home page for a court update.

Tennis shoes required (no "black soled shoes" that mark the court surface).

Cell phone use during class time is limited to emergencies or with consent of a coach.

Contact Head Pro Patric Hermanson to see if there is space available in the class you would like to participate in.