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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

Guest Fees

Guest fees here at the Club are \$5 per guest, per visit, all day, every day. If you bring a guest, the member (s) is (are) responsible for seeing that the guest fee is paid. Most members see to it that guest fees are paid. Often the guests offer to pay for themselves, sometimes members treat their guests. The payment arrangement doesn't matter to me, but paying the guest fees is important for two basic reasons:

1) We collect a significant amount of income from guest fees that go towards off setting the cost of doing business. I've spent the last couple of months working on the budget for 2011 and trying to keep costs and dues in line. I can tell you that the guest fee contribution is the equivalent of 5 or more memberships per year. In other words, we could collect no guest fees and raise everyone's dues \$4 dollars a month, every month (\$48 per year – a 4% increase, just on that alone, without considering any other cost increases the Club may incur).

2) More importantly, Orindawoods is a Club for members. We allow guests so that our members have some variety in the people that they play with. But the members are paying for this wonderful facility, and guests should know that this is not a public park, and having wonderful courts like this is not free.

Many players, including our members, play at public facilities from time to time. Those facilities are paid for by taxes (nothing is free), and so we can start to think that tennis is a "free" sport just because we are not paying \$5 to play. The two obvious differences between Orindawoods and public courts are 1) our courts are much nicer (I hear this almost daily), and 2) they are much nicer because the members pay to keep them that way.

This Club is run on the honor system. If we had a front desk, and a gated club, and we checked in every member and every guest, as many clubs do, you could add another \$10-15 at least to the monthly dues to pay for the staffing, and that doesn't even include the construction for barbed wire fencing the club in and putting up guard towers and security personnel with semi-automatic weapons (I jest, but you get the point). The self-monitoring of guests keeps each of our expenses down, and keeps the club welcoming and friendly.

Our guest fee is very reasonable at \$5. If you forget your \$5 this time, bring it next time or borrow it from a friend, but help support and keep our Club wonderful. We spent \$40,000 on Court One this year. We spent \$40,000 on the pool last year. Orindawoods is a wonderful club because of the support it gets from its members and homeowners. We have beautiful courts, a great staff, wonderful programs, and there is a cost involved.

Paying guest fees, like paying dues, is a question of respect, respect from the people that are not members, and respect for the people who are members and are paying for keeping Orindawoods wonderful. Please pay guest fees that are due.

Anna Marie

New Associate Pro Anna Marie has had a great first month at the Club. Thank you all for welcoming her to our family. She has done a great job in the junior program, and has started booking several private lessons. She still has some choice time slots, but they are filling up quickly, so don't wait too long. For those of you who missed Anna Marie's bio last month, she is a native of Orinda, played for Miramonte High School, and lives in town with her husband and two kids. We are lucky, and thrilled to have Anna Marie on staff here at Orindawoods. To contact Anna Marie for a lesson, call the club (254-1065) or write her directly at gamboa.tennis@yahoo.com.

Pool Closing

After a brilliant, hot summer (which actually took place in late September and October), it is time once again to close the pool for the season. The last day the pool will be open this season is Sunday, October 24. The pool will reopen in May, the exact date based on the weather at the time.

Unfortunately, there is not enough use to justify keeping the spa open in the wintertime. Some people have requested that, but it just is too hard to keep it heated verses how much it costs.

See you out by the pool next Spring!

Reindeer Games

On Sunday, December 12, we will hold our annual Reindeer Games here at Orindawoods from 12 – 4 p.m.. This holiday tennis social is a big hit (on years that it doesn't rain). There is no charge to play, but we may ask you to bring some holiday goodies at the time. To register or get more information, please sign-up on the Club's website (click on the event on the Club Calendar) or contact Keith at the Club, or Lysbeth McNeill.

No Courts Available Nov. 13-14

Orindawoods Junior Championships

On the weekend of November 12-14 the Club will be hosting the Orindawoods Junior Championships, as tournament in the Contra Costa Junior Tennis Series. If you would like to sign up for this event, you can do so by going to www.topdogtennis.com. Click on "leagues", and then on "tournaments" on the next page. The tournament has Boys and Girls singles 10, 12, 14 & 16. If you have questions, ask Patric or Keith.

Court Cam & Weather Reports

Working outside, you can get to be a bit of a weather nut. As I write this article, we are in the middle of our first rain of the season. Besides the two crazy guys down on court 2 (our first "real tennis players" of the winter), everyone has gone home for the morning to get dry and warm. If you are not sure of the weather, remember that we have the Orindawoods Court Cam available to see on the Club's website. The court cam updates every five minutes or so, so you can see if the courts are dry, or if there are any free courts (usually several on wet days). Also, on days when the staff is in the office, we update our "Orindawoods Weather and Court Report" on the home page of the website every couple of hours. Keep dodging those rain drops!

Match Preparation

Home Court Advantage and Other Pre-Match Opportunities

In most sports it is considered to be an advantage to play on your home court. You know how the courts play. You are used to the nuances of the ball bounce, local wind patterns. You feel comfortable in a familiar place. And you get a good warm up.

Unless, of course, you play on one of our teams, who never seem to warm-up. This is a mystery to me, as all our players claim to enjoy winning. I'm often teaching prior to our league matches, and about a half hour or so before the match is scheduled to start several ladies show up on the deck, get oriented, and go down and get a great warm up. The problem is, they are the visiting team. Our team straggles in, often only a couple of minutes before start time, hits a few balls and have to start playing. By the way, the stressed out woman standing off to the side, pulling her hair out would be our captain, who is not sure if our players are even going to show up (I wonder how ready she is going to be to play calm and in control in her own match five minutes later).

Now I teach a lot of clinics, and in each clinic or lesson there is a warm up period. We do a bit of short court, hit some groundstrokes, do a bit of baseline vs. net rallies, and then hit some serves and returns. Basically, every shot you are going to need in a match. It takes 10 minutes or so, (sometimes 15 minutes with the more advanced groups – that should tell you something right there). I didn't always do this in the past, but I find that the clinics go much better when there is this routine before playing. Now, believe it or not, I have some people who are habitually late. And some of them "warm-up" pretty quickly, but I can tell you, no one plays as well as they do after they are properly warmed up. That is no one. None. Zero. Zip. Pros warm up on practice courts for forty-five minutes. Some people delude themselves into thinking they don't need a warm up, but my forty years of tennis experience says different.

I remember back in high school and college when we would drive about a million miles to get to some other school, climb out of the car all stiff and sore, and the home team would be out there banging balls and totally ready. We'd drag ourselves out onto the court and the coach would say, "Five minute warm-up and we start." It was pretty hard to get loose in those five minutes, let alone find my game, and I was 18 years old at the time. I don't get loose as fast as 39 (ha ha).

We have courts reserved for warm-up at the club before matches. They are for us, not for our opponents. I'd

love to see our teams be a bit more prepared for play. I think we would do better, and winning is almost always more fun. But hey, suit yourself.

Other Preparations: There are other things that we need to do before the match even begins that increase our chance of doing well. The right combination of water and food is crucial. Make sure that you have eaten, and that you have enough fuel to get through the match (and plan for the longest possible match – 3 hours – don't count on 45 minutes and off to lunch). Most people don't do well eating right before a match, but be sure you have eaten something a couple of hours before. Drink lots of water. If it is hot, like it has been recently, you should be starting to hydrate a day or so before you play (wine and beer isn't hydrating, it's dehydrating, by the way – sorry).

When you go on the court, make sure you have plenty of water. You can have a water bottle, or plan to visit the drinking fountains, but I would drink a sip or so on every change over. Once you are thirsty, your performance has already been affected.

Quote of the Month:

"Biography of a Learner"

Chapter One: A man walks down a street and falls in a hole. He screams, "It's not my fault! I didn't see the hole." He struggles, and it takes him a long time to get out.

Chapter Two: The man walks down the street the next day and falls in the hole again. "It's not my fault! Who put this hole here! I'm mad as hell, and someone is going to pay. I'll sue." It takes him a very long time to get out.

Chapter Three: The man walks down the street, sees the hole, but falls in anyway. He accepts responsibility for falling in the hole, puts his mind to getting out and climbs out fairly quickly.

Chapter Four: The man walks down the street, sees the hole, walks around it and goes on his way.

Chapter Five: The man walks down a different street.

-- Unknown



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*Reservations, Club
calendar, weather and
court updates, lesson
programs and much
more!*

It is important to have some food in your tennis bag. Power bar, goo, shot blocks, banana, whatever. Have something that you can eat if you feel a bit drained and hungry. I know, you weren't planning to play a three-hour match in ninety degree heat, but it is 3-4 in the third, your match started at 10:30 and it is close to 1:00, and you are gassed and out of fuel. The fact that you are dying is largely within your control, not the weather's. This is a very winnable match, if you are prepared.

In The Bag: Other things that are nice to have in a tennis bag are a hat or visor. An extra racquet (if a string breaks). Sunglasses. I always have a headband or sweet bands even though there are only a very few days of the year when I need them. But I want them when I do. A change of socks is a good idea. When socks get wet, they stop protecting your skin from blisters. I always have some athletic tape, and some band-aids. An ice pack that activates when you squeeze it is a nice addition. Towel, for sure. Extra overgrip if you use it. Tissue. A cloth for wiping your glasses. Froggog. Water bottle. I even have a tape measure for measuring the net.

Warming Up: There are a lot of things you can learn in the warm up (even if you hate warming up). Hit a ball right at your opponent and see which shot they hit it back with. That will be their dominant, preferred side. Which shot do they look a bit shaky on? How was their overhead in warm up? When you spin the racquet, which player makes the call? That's their A dog. The A dog is going to tend to take charge, and they are going to tend to get frustrated if the B dog isn't carrying their weight. What is the chemistry between your opponents? Do they seem to get along well, or never talk? Is there some tension? Who looks tight? The scariest opponent is the one who looks calm and stays calm no matter what.

When you are warming up, focus on your rhythm and timing, not whether you are making shots. In other words, focus on the process, not the outcome (you want to start thinking that way right from the warm up, because you want to keep thinking on the process during the match). Establish your contact area, and don't chase balls that are not in it. If they don't hit the ball to you, don't chase it. The last thing you want to do is get frantic in warm up. Remember, you are here to win the war (the match), not the battle (individual points or shots). Winning warm up counts zero. Don't do anything that compromises your ability to play well long-term.

Mental focus: Something is going to go wrong, be difficult, challenge you, what ever. If it doesn't, you're just lucky. Count on something in the match challenging you. You don't know what it is going to be, bad line call, difficult partner (I hope not, but it happens), left your forehand back at the cabin in Tahoe, something. When the bad stuff shows up, just prepare to stay focused and greet trouble like an old friend.

Focus, rhythm and timing. That's all, that's enough. Accomplish that, and you stand a good chance of playing well. Playing well is really all about controlling your contact zone (see below). Good luck out there!

Lessons From La Quinta

Last month I traveled south to LaQuinta for the United States Professional Tennis Association World Conference on Tennis. Here's a quick summary of some of the things that I learned:

It was a great convention this year, and I am really fired up about tennis, and the teaching and learning of tennis for the future.

Quick Start: First of all, this is the easiest time in the history of tennis for children to learn the game. With QuickStart Tennis, it has never been easier. QuickStart basically scales down tennis with smaller racquets, balls that don't bounce as high, and smaller nets and courts so that kids can play a game that is more their size. Baseball, soccer, basketball and other sports have been doing this for years. Now tennis has been adapted to our smaller players too. Patric, Anna Marie and our Junior Program have been using QuickStart for about a year now, and the results are incredible. I've never seen kids learn this fast!

Contact Zone: Scott Ford and Desmond Oon presented a great workshop on playing in the zone. Playing in the zone sure is fun, but until now, it's been hard to

get into the zone. We seem to find zone by magic, some days it is there, many days we are far from it. Ford presented a method of watching the contact area rather than watching the ball that repeatedly leads to players finding the zone. Since my return, I have accomplished this myself many times, and gotten my students to play in the zone over and over again. An interesting process, a bit too detailed to describe here, but I am convinced it works. A little teaser here: watching the ball is five times slower (the way your brain and body react) than focusing instead on your contact zone and seeing the ball come into that area.

Reading shots: Hank Pfster, the former top ten player, gave a great workshop on reading the ball. He said the demonstration was about the serve and volley, but it was really about how to position yourself to reply to your opponent's shot. His shots (like most shots we hit), force our opponents to hit the ball to certain areas. Then he would cover that area, and only getting beat on the brilliant shots, which are relatively rare. Ball position, footwork, height, depth and our opponent's grip all determine where their shot can go. A great lesson in percentage tennis.

A Turn of the Ball: Legendary tennis teacher Oscar Weger presented his thoughts on the modern strokes. Agreeing with Ford (above), he was much more concerned with the contact point and how we relate to that than watching the ball. Weger maintained that the modern stroke consisted of finding the ball, and a turn of the racquet on the ball (much like I discussed in last month's newsletter). The smaller the turn, the quicker the racquet would go, but the racquet would only be going quick at contact. Physics tells us that force is mass times acceleration (not mass times speed), so it is how fast we go from a relatively slow speed, to full speed, that matters. Right at the contact point. This is best accomplished by torque, or turning, as opposed to swinging (which has a more constant rate of speed).

Video Sampras: John Yandell presented some of his most recent research and film on the forehand and the serve. One of the interesting moments was an analysis of Pete's serve. The question was, if Pete hit a serve down the middle in the add court at 120 miles per hour, how fast was the racquet going at contact. As Weger stated above, acceleration is the key ingredient. Pete's racquet moved very slow through most of the stroke (5-7 mph), picking up to about 30mph when it reached the bottom of the back scratch position, from there to contact the speed drastically increased to 90 mph, then went from 90 mph back down to 30 mph by the time the racquet had turned over in front of him (tip of the racquet pointing down, the elbow pointed up). The entire service motion took Pete 2 seconds, but the part that went from 30 to 90, and then back down to 30 mph only took .2 seconds, or 10% of the stroke time. Once again, acceleration is what created the power, and the racquet was only quick right near contact (and from turning, not swinging, as stated above). To answer the question Yandell posed: the racquet only had to be going 90 mph to hit the ball 120 mph, or you get 33% more speed on the ball than the racquet is traveling. Interesting stuff.

Managing the Club: There were several interesting sessions on managing the club, which I will be implementing over the next several months. Tennis is doing well as a sport, with good participation and many new players.

And by the way, it was really hot in La Quinta. 105 most days, and usually still over 90 at 11 p.m.. But suffering through the heat was worth it, I learned so much, and I am really fired up (not over-heated) about tennis!

The 2010 Fall Junior Program Schedule At Orindawoods Tennis Club

<u>Level</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>	<u>One day/week</u>	<u>Two Days</u>
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I	<u>Lil' Ones (Ages 4-6)</u>	Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm	\$160*	\$250*
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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.

II	<u>Future Stars Group (Ages 7-10)</u>	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm	\$315*	N/A
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The Future Stars Group is for players with no tennis experience to those who have played a year or two.

III	<u>Tennis Development Group (Ages 11-13)</u>	Thursdays 4-5:30pm	\$315*	N/A
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The Tennis Development Group is for our junior high schoolers, and for the younger players who can hit the ball back 4 to 5 times per rally and can serve the ball in from the baseline.

IV	<u>Tournament Training Group</u>	Wednesdays 4:30-6pm	\$315*	N/A
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The Tournament Training Group is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.

V	<u>Friday Tennis Events</u>	Fridays 4:00-6:00pm	\$TBA	
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Interclubs, pizza tournaments and special training sessions will be organized for selected Fridays in the fall. Dates to be announced, and costs dependent on the event.

It's not too late to join us for a great Fall Season!

