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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

Court Construction / New Lights

The City of Orinda has approved our lighting project after an unexpected delay of about two months. We are planning to go ahead with the work beginning in late September and going on through some of October. Unfortunately, this delay has taken us from a time of the year when there was plenty of evening daylight to play without lights, to a time of the year when we will be without lighted courts for a period of time. This is frustrating.

There will be no night play after dark for a couple of weeks. The exact dates are unknown at this time, as the first phase of the work will not require taking the current lights down. The company doing the work, Saviano, understands our predicament, and will do the work as quickly as possible. More details will follow as to the particulars, and the timetable, as soon as they are known. This information will come in the form of e mails, so look for these updates as the work nears, continues, and is completed.

There will be some changes to our court usage, since courts 2&3 will be unavailable for play during some of this period. No doubt having two fewer courts will impact the membership, and we ask for your cooperation during this brief, but necessary time. Just keep remembering, that in the end, we will end up with very nice lighted courts that will last for many years.

Court Usage and Reservations: With courts 2 & 3 closed, we will make some changes to the reservation rules at the Club:

Courts 4 & 5 / Drop-in Courts: Courts 4 & 5 will become reservable, though at least one will be kept for lessons, depending on the lesson schedule. That means there will be no "Drop-in Courts" at the Club, so please make reservations if you want to play. This is a tough call, but during these restricted court times, we would rather all the courts be full with people who have made reservations than leave one open so that someone may or may not show up. Apologies to spur-of-the-moment players.

No Ball Machine: Painful as this is to our ball machine lovers, there will be no ball machine use during the court 2 & 3 closure. The power outlets are only on courts 2 & 3. In addition, we would like to have more than one person using a court at a time, so even if we could run an extension cord to another court, we wouldn't want a court to be occupied by only one person using the ball machine when 2-4 could be playing. Thanks.

League Match Play: We have several league matches scheduled in October. There was no way to schedule around the construction, as we did not yet have approval. These matches will be played on courts 4, 6 & 7. During league play, there will be lessons on court 5.

Men's and Women's Clinics Canceled: There will be no Men's and Women's Clinics the weeks that courts 2 & 3 are closed.

Junior Program and Afternoon Lessons: The Junior Program will continue in the afternoons on courts 4, 5, 6 & 7. We may use court 1 for lessons, or reduce the Junior Program to three courts at times. This will be determined as the time approaches. Open play in the afternoon between 4-5:30 will be very limited.

We are hoping to get the project completed as quickly as possible, and certainly before November 4, when Daylight Savings Time ends. Again, we will send updates as the schedule becomes more apparent via e-mail. Thanks for your support and patience. I think the end reward will be happiness for all.

The League Match Challenge

League matches take three courts at a time to play. This can be a challenge for non-league playing members, as it takes away a sizable number of our courts. Of course many of our members enjoy playing league, and count it as one of their best tennis experiences. So the challenge is to strike a balance, and understand the league situation better.

On the weekend, we don't start the matches until 11 a.m. to allow other members to have open play on as many courts as possible before league matches during prime time. The weekday leagues, by rule, must start at 9:30 a.m. (warm up by 9:15) and therefore, are more disruptive.

Because league play reduces our available courts by three, our long-standing policy is to eliminate the drop-in courts during league play, so that non-league players that want to play can make a reservation on the remaining courts, and those courts will be used rather than potentially remain vacant because people didn't have a reservation. That means that during league play, the players that prefer to just drop-in, need to make reservations if they plan to play. We understand this is an inconvenience to those players, but it is a concession we have to make to both league play (and the many members who thoroughly enjoy that), and the desire to keep the courts full if people want to play. Orindawoods is so wonderful that with a little bit of planning, you can find an open court at most times. But this is a shared-use facility, so while we give everyone the opportunity to get a court, in no way can we guarantee that you will get one at a specific time. Especially if you plan on just showing up.

Unfortunately, our court crunch will be compounded by the court construction in late September and parts of October.

Tennis Tip

Consider This Question

In playing and learning a sport like tennis, we have thoughts and ideas that help us, and we have some concepts and beliefs that get in our way. Often we don't even realize these thoughts and beliefs are there, until we use our conscious mind to go back and examine them. Some beliefs run so deep that they are in our subconscious, and take a lot of work to retrieve, even at all. Even once these beliefs are brought to the light of day, they can still be very difficult to change. Sometimes these beliefs run contrary to our needs, but we are not even aware of the conflict or we are sometimes helpless to effect a change.

Consider this tactical and strategic problem that we come up against on every point we play in tennis, singles or doubles. Statistics show that almost every match is decided by unforced errors. That is, people missing a shot that they can make. "Tennis is 70% unforced errors," is the often-quoted phrase. That leaves 30% for winners and forced errors (good shots by our opponent that we can hit, but are really out of our skill set to make). Sounds good.

However, when your opponent hits you the ball, our thought is often to avoid our opponent. We attempt to hit the ball away from them. This is so natural, I bet few would question the logic of this maneuver. This is especially true in doubles, where there is an opponent who is often facing us at the net. We are afraid that they will hit a winner if I hit it near them.

The Question. But the obvious question is: how will they make a mistake, if I don't hit it to them?

Remember, the match is decided by unforced errors (missing shots they could make), not by forced errors or winners (that is, hitting it away from them, difficult shots they chase after). We need to give them a chance to miss. Why don't we?

The problem is, I suppose, we don't know when they are going to mess up, and when they are going to hit a winner. So it seems like a lot of uncertainty to hit it to them. We decide to be safe, and just try to avoid them. Unfortunately, this increases our unforced errors. Enough to often lose. Playing it safe ain't safe.

Crazy Goran. Let me offer a story of how our thinking can get skewed when we are under pressure. Several years ago in 1994 Goran Ivanisevic was about to play Wimbledon, a tournament he desperately wanted to win, but never had (at that point). He had lost a very close final in 1990 to Agassi. He trained hard, played well in the warm up events and went into the tournament really wanting to win. It took winning seven rounds to win Wimbledon, and Ivanisevic won his first match, then his second, and so on until he had won six, and reached the final. The problem was, he was playing Pete Sampras, the #1 player in the world and already a Wimbledon legend. But Ivanisevic wanted this one badly. Sampras started hot, and the first two sets were very close with Sampras winning both in tie-breakers. Losing these first two tie-breakers was a painful outcome for Goran, who wanted so much to win. So what happened in the third set? Ivanisevic tanked, and lost 0-6. He gave up. Gave up on his dream when he was only 3 sets away from winning. Now it might be very hard to win three sets in a row from Pete Sampras at Wimbledon, but remember, to win the final, Goran had to win three sets anyway. First 3, last 3, combination 3 out of 5, didn't matter. He still had to win three sets. And consider this, even down two sets to none, he was much closer to winning Wimbledon than he was two weeks earlier, before the tournament started, and he hadn't won any of the previous six matches (he had to win 18 sets to get

through those matches). So why did Goran give up? Faulty thinking ("its not my day") and just way too much pain of losing those two tie-breakers. It hurt so badly he just wanted to get out of there, even though he was so close to his dream, and quitting (tanking) meant he had no chance. And of course you could throw in there his belief that he couldn't beat Pete. Sitting back here in our armchair back at home, his behavior looks ridiculous, and drives fans crazy, but these kinds of faulty thinking happens all the time.

The Black Door. Here is an even crazier tale of bad choices. There's a Middle Eastern story of a spy who had been captured and sentenced to death by a general of the Persian army. The general had fallen upon a strange and rather bizarre custom. He permitted the condemned person to make a choice. He could either face the firing squad or pass through the black door.

As the moment of execution drew near, the general ordered the spy to be brought before him for a short, final interview, the primary purpose of which was to receive the answer of the doomed man to the question: "Which shall it be - the firing squad or the black door?"

This was not an easy question, and the prisoner hesitated, but soon he made it known that he much preferred the firing squad. Not long thereafter, a volley of shots in the courtyard announced the grim sentence had been fulfilled. The general, staring at his boots, turned to his aide and said, "You see how it is with men; they will always prefer the known way to the unknown. It is characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. And yet I gave him his choice."

Quote of the Month

If you play poker long enough, you will be beaten by the turn of an unlucky card. It's not a question of "if," it's a question of "when." If you can't deal with the pure concept of chance, you should seriously consider taking up an all-skill game like chess.... [Have bad luck?], Just suck it up and live with it.

-- Mark Harlan, *Texas Hold'em For Dummies*



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"What lies behind the black door?" asked the aide. "Freedom," replied the general, "and I've known only a few men brave enough to take it."

Pain and uncertainty cause us to make decisions that on the surface, with no pressure, seem to be less than ideal. If I need my opponent to miss, and miss more than I do, why do I hit it away from them? Why do I make errors trying to avoid them, or overpower them, or embarrass them? Why not let them miss.

A Game Of Catch. Tennis is much more a game of catch, hitting it back and forth to each other, than we would like to admit. Or we have the courage to admit, or the stomach to play. The uncertainty causes us to do strange things, things that are not in our best interest. Maybe not as bad as the Black Door, or giving up on our dream when so close, like Goran, but still, crazy choices just the same. The percentages are clear, you win if they miss, but in the moment, we avoid them just the same (and often make our own errors – which in some strange way doesn't hurt as much as them hitting a winner – which is really odd reasoning – done every day on every court). And even if we don't miss, avoiding our opponent often puts us in a worse situation tactically to win the point.

Perhaps an even simpler explanation lies in this: "For every situation in life, there is answer that is clear, simple and wrong."

So What Do I Do? Of course there are ways to hit to our opponent that is more likely to make them miss than others. The most obvious would be hitting to your opponent's weakest shot. Or hitting the ball to a shot that your opponent hits too aggressively on, and tends to miss more than he should. But there are other ways. Here is one that is used by the pros, and works very well.

In doubles, if you get a ball out wide on your forehand, don't just hit it crosscourt away from the net person. While this seems safe (see bad decisions above), avoiding the net person actually wins you fewer points. Figure A (page 4) shows the three choices. Remember, if you can go down the alley (1), your opponent will move to cover that shot. That means the crosscourt (3) will be no where near the net player (see safe ain't safe), but right to the opponent's backcourt player who has moved out wide and is playing for the angle (angle to angle). You've just put their backcourt player in the same advantageous position you were just in. Not a good plan. The best shot is just off the net player's racquet (2). If they reach for it, due to the angle, pace and uncertainty (they don't know for sure you are not going down the line), they are not going to get their body behind the volley and probably miss or hit a weak shot you can cover. This is a much better play than hitting to the backcourt opponent's forehand (3), who then can give the same tough shot to your partner. This is a classic example of it being better to hit at the net person than to avoid them. From time to time, the net person will hit a winner (see quote of the month), but you will win more points to (2) than to (1) or (3). Hard to believe, but true. Try it out. And not only that, but if you play that shot (2) in a pressure situation (5-5 in the 3rd set), they are even more likely to make a mistake. And if they choose not to hit it, then the ball will end up in the middle of the court, on your opponent's backhand at 2. A very favorable situation for your team as well as your partner moves in (see partner's movement, 2 vs. 3 if you hit wide to 3 or middle to 2).

Conclusion. So we come full circle. We need to examine our philosophy about how we are going to go about playing and accomplishing our goals. Are we working in line with our needs, or at cross-purposes?

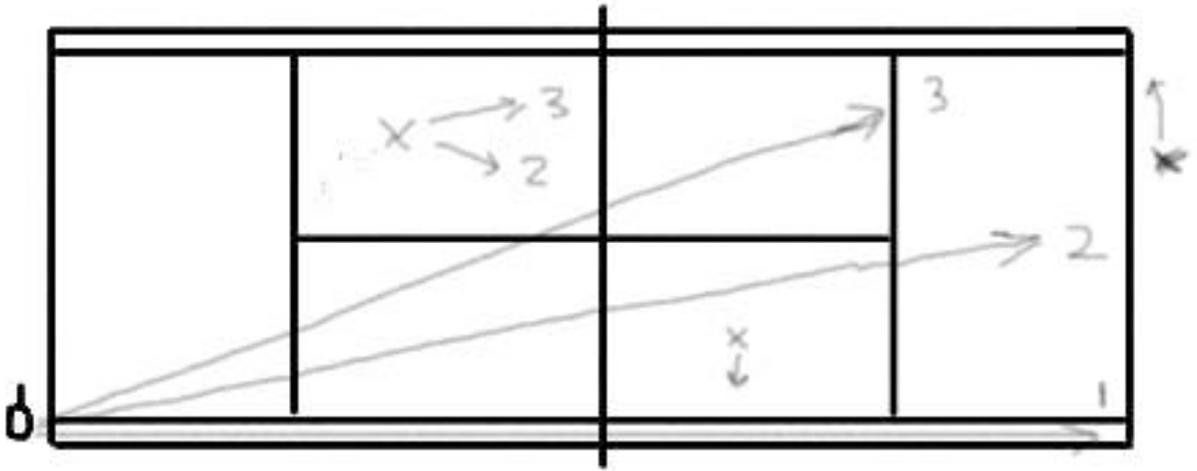
It is an interesting problem, this winning a tennis match. I need my opponent's help to win. They need to make mistakes. This means that the outcome is out of my control, and that is scary. I'd rather be in control and hit all winners, but it is not possible. Of course, one way to stay in control is miss every shot, or give up, like Goran. But to win, I'm going to have to enlist the help of the enemy. Not only do they miss shots outright, but they are likely to make the same poor choices outlined above, giving you the advantage.

What is your basic belief? Avoid your opponents or let them miss? It is an interesting question, and will go a long way towards deciding if you are ultimately going to be successful or not. Are you strong enough to face your fears? Good luck out there!

Pool Schedule

The Orindawoods Tennis Club Pool will close for the season at the end of October. We will reopen on May 1. Splash, splash. Enjoy the last great month of pool fun!

Fig. A



OWTC Fall Junior Tennis Program *September 3-December 14*

The 2012 Fall Junior Clinics began the week of September 3rd, and will continue thru the week of December 10th. There are no classes the week of November 19-23rd. Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa will run the 14-week program.

The Level I and II classes will be taught using aspects of the USTA Quickstart / Ten and Under Tennis Program. Level III will also spend time using Quickstart.

Class Schedule:

Level	Class	Time (s)	One day/week	Two
I	Lil' Ones <i>The Lil' Ones 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.</i>	Tues/Thursday 3:15-4pm	\$150*	\$235*
II	Future Stars Group <i>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.</i>	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm	\$300*	n/a
III	10s Development Group <i>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 through 14.</i>	Thursdays 4-5:30pm	\$300*	n/a
IV	Tournament Training <i>The Tournament Training Group is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.</i>	Wednesdays 4:30-6pm	\$300*	n/a

***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 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 update.

Tennis Shoes Required (no black soled shoes that mark the court).

For more information or to sign up, please check the club website, or call Keith or Patric at the Pro Shop (925-254-1065) or you can also e-mail Patric at patrictennis@yahoo.com.

