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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

League Tennis Underway

We have lots of ladies league action this fall, with the USTA Combo Leagues, the Fall leagues and BALL leagues. Weekday matches are generally restricted to Monday and Friday mornings (no exceptions yet, but once it rains, we'll see). USTA Combo matches start at 11 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

There are not matches every Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so be sure to check the Club Calendar on the website. League matches only take 3 courts, so there should be a couple of other courts to make reservations on. However, league matches do take the two drop-in courts (4 & 5), so there is no drop-in play during league matches.

IMPORTANT: Due to the large number of league teams, we have had to double up matches on a couple of days (every court in use on those mornings). We apologize for this decision, but in weighing all the options, this seemed better than spreading out onto more days. Therefore, there will be NO COURTS available for play on the mornings of Friday, October 7, and Friday, November 4.

Doubt, Faith, Belief and Conviction

Have you ever hit a shot to you opponent at the net, and they just nail the volley? Not just hit a good volley, but hit it like they knew what was coming. Kind of like it was batting practice, or a drill in a clinic. They were clearly ready for your shot. Locked in. Rather than get upset with myself for hitting what appeared to be an easy shot for them, I will often joke and say, "Was that about the right height and speed for you?" This usually gets a laugh, and keeps me from going to a bad place, mentally and emotionally.

Later in the same match, you may hit a second shot that looks really weak, and certainly will have the same result, and then the strangest thing happens. They move awkwardly, sometimes stumble, flail at the ball, and miss the easiest of sitters, like somehow they weren't even ready. You feel a tremendous sense of relief, like you have gotten the "get out of jail free" card in Monopoly. And of course, they are probably upset for missing an easy one. You feel better, they feel worse, and you won a point you had no business winning. My good friend and fellow pro Judy Newman calls that "free bacon."

What just happened in these two scenarios is what I want to discuss today.

Doubt What happened was doubt, or lack of doubt in the first scenario. Often when I am teaching a lesson, and we are working on a shot, like say, the forehand volley, my students hit shot after shot, getting better with each repetition, and they will make a comment like, "Why can't I hit it like that when I play?"

Doubt. Uncertainty. In practice, they know that the shot is coming, about where, and about how fast. It is batting practice, drilling, repetition building muscle memory. These things are all important. Without form, you have no long-term chance when uncertainty comes into play (everybody gets lucky once in awhile). But that sort of practice is not what you are being asked to do in a game, unless you know which shot is coming. Is it going to be a forehand or a backhand?

Bees Business

More Bees Please

Are you kidding me? Are we still talking about these little critters buzzing around?

What a challenge these hive huggers have been. Of course I'm about to report that the problem has been solved. You have no more fears. All is well. I say that with little or no conviction, as Mother Nature decides what is best, and we are left with the rest.

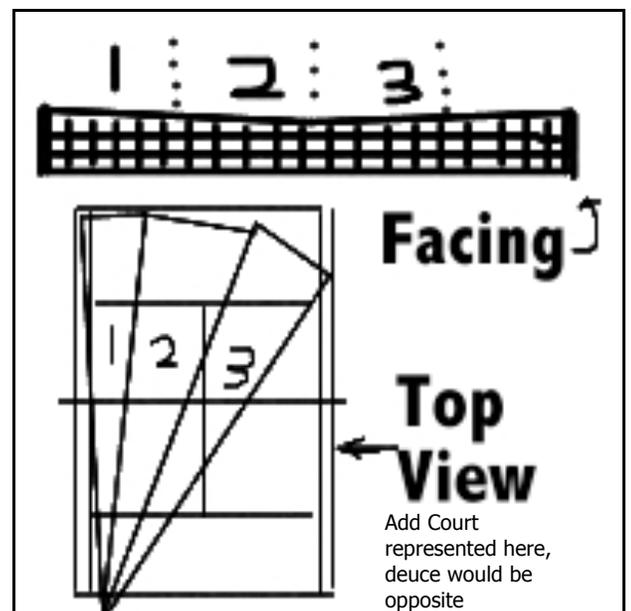
Stay tune for further installments of the Bees That Would Not Die.

Pool Closing

Can summer be over already? It seems like we just went for our first dip in the pool (though if you read Anastasia Kaiser's article last month, you know I never dip, let alone double dip). Well, the pool will remain open a few more weeks, but all the fun will be coming to a close soon. We are just waiting for Mother Nature to sprinkle the opening shots of winter, and the heater is off, and the swimsuits go back in the drawer until Spring. Sadness. We will reopen in May of 2012. It is not too long of a wait.

Court Washing

During the dry season, the courts will be washed on the first (courts 1-3) and last (courts 4-7) Fridays of the month from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Check the court scheduler for court availability. Remember, clean courts are happy courts.



Down the line, crosscourt? Lob or volley?

This is the whole reason for weather reports and economics. People want to know what is going to happen in the future, even if it is impossible to know. Since we can't know, we turn to insurance to protect us ("cover your alley"), even though there is no real protection, just the illusion of safety.

So if I am hitting, how do I create doubt in my opponent? And if I am receiving, how do I deal with the doubt that creeps in?

Zones Over the Net Targets, and being able to hit them, are huge in this process. I like to divide the area above the net into four sections (see diagram on page 1). Counting out from the side of the court you are on, I label them one, two, three, four. So one is the alley shot on your side, two and three represent the middle of the net, and four is the far side (which you can't hit into except with a soft dropshot because if you do, the ball will go wide). So three target areas over the net. Can you hit them? With any shot? In any situation? How are you limited? In general, by a particular shot? Do you know it? Does your opponent? Most players, with a bit of practice, can hit all three zones with the forehand. Down the line with the backhand is tough for most players, especially if the shot they are receiving is challenging. So hit as many forehands as you can.

Remember my obvious, but seldom practiced advice, only hit shots you can make. If you are limited by skill or situation, a good opponent will figure that out and disregard what you are incapable of doing on a consistent basis.

Four Weapons There are four weapons in tennis: time (speed, and distance the ball has to travel are involved here), placement, spin and deception. Success comes largely from mixing and matching these four. Today's discussion is largely about deception, but placement, time and spin all come into play. The player who hits the ball the hardest, or the most accurately, are not often the best players, unless they have deception, or the spin that makes their ball tougher to hit.

The Scariest Foe, Or the Master in Tennis Clothing The toughest opponent, the one that strikes fear in all they play, is the one who calmly goes about their business, never bothered by any situation. Before they hit, you have no idea where the ball is going to go, and after they hit, it is clear, without a doubt, they hit it right where they wanted. They hold to form no matter what you throw at them, and give your best shots no mind at all. This concept of not trying is captured beautifully in the Tao Te Ching:

The master does nothing, but leaves nothing undone. The ordinary man is always doing things, yet many more are left to be done.

Decisions, When and Where Most players decide far too early where they are going to hit their shot. Often the result of this is that they give away where they are going, thus removing doubt from the opponent who pays attention. This isn't good. You end up with a lot more situations where they nail the ball. You are left wondering why they are so "on" today.

Before your opponent hits the ball to you, you should be in a basic ready position, light on your feet, both hands holding your racquet (hands hold, feet move, remember that, and you are a long way towards getting home. Remember, most people let hands swing, and feet plant. This gives you a huge advantage over most people you play). When your opponent hits the ball, you need to discern which way it is going. Then you make what is called a unit turn, in other words, a turn with your whole body. Your hands should continue to hold, and stay in front of your body (the worst tennis advice ever was "get your racquet back" – that is not preparation, other than preparation for disaster). Now you want to move to the ball, and start to wind the arm and the body (much different than taking the racquet back). Only as the ball bounces, and you complete your alignment to the contact point and the ball, should you decide where you are going to hit. Only at this late point, do you have the information that you need (how fast is the ball, what is its trajectory, how did it bounce, where is your opponent, etc...), and there isn't time to wait any longer. Unwind on the ball, and hold the racquet face to the target. The smile of enlightenment is appropriate now. Think Mona Lisa. This poor sucker on the other side of the net doesn't have a chance. You could almost pity the poor fool, but it is best just to beat him as quickly as possible, and thus relieve his pain and suffering.

Belief at the Net It is pretty simple. If we look at all the doubles matches played today, tomorrow, yesterday, and forever, a very large percentage of the balls travel across the net in the middle. A percentage way high enough to bet on. If you want to succeed at the net, I would prepare to hit the shot that is going to pass through the middle (For righthanders: forehand if you are on the deuce side, backhand if you were on the add side). In other words, you need to cover Zone 2 in the example above (add court in the diagram, opposite on deuce). If a ball goes through Zone 2, you should nail it.

Conviction. Conviction is harder. You can know something, like the vast majority of the balls in doubles go through the middle. But you don't know on this particular shot, if the ball will go through the middle. That's doubt. How much doubt

you have will make the difference between scenario #1 and scenario #2 above. Much of playing the net well is to continue to cover/control the middle in the face of recent evidence to the contrary (shots down the alley, lobs, shots rocketed right at you). Of course there are two components to this. Physically you have to position yourself to cover the middle. That's the easy part, and the necessary first step, but you also have to keep those nagging doubts that they are about to go up the line out of your head.

Quote of the Month:

"Don't forget in the darkness what you knew in the light."
– Bob Munger.



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*Reservations, Club
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more!*

Much harder. It is these fearful emotions that can defeat us, and we have to manage those emotions with our beliefs (spiritual / mental), and our positioning (physical).

Keeping faith is resisting despair regardless of what may happen. McEnroe would say that he was going to come to the net one hundred and fifty times in a match, get passed fifty times, and still win. That is the strength to give up a lot of winners to remember what you believe. Never belittle that, for arm-chair quarterbacks can see the percentages quite clearly, but to do it on the field of battle, when you are under intense pressure, is another matter. "If you can keep your head when all around are losing theirs and blaming you" writes Kipling. Or our quote of the month from an old pastor of mine: "Don't forget in the darkness what you knew in the light."

Free Bacon Is The Best Most good players keep an even temperament. Sure, we remember the moments of great emotion. The Nadal fist pump, Federer's tears, Djokovic elated, Sampras puking his guts out, Serena threatening a lines woman, or yelling at the chair umpire this year, but if you watch their reaction during most of the match, it is pretty muted. Especially if they are winning. And champions attempt not to get too upset when they miss. If you have ever played the game, you know this is very hard to do. Frustration happens, and builds. And even if you can hold it together on the outside, your insides may very well be churning, scolding, screaming from the tension of it all.

Remember Judy's wisdom, "free bacon is the best." If you get too upset when you miss, and your opponent gets pumped, you have done serious damage to your chances of winning, especially in the next few games. When your opponent hits a winner, or you hit a winner, the striker of the ball feels a bit better, but there isn't the great mood swings we see when someone fluffs an easy one and then gets really upset.

It's helpful to remember, no one point is that important. Keep on an even keel and think what is best long-term, and don't ride the wave of emotion each point.

The Strategy of Winning So winning a match mostly involves less hitting it away from the opponent, and more hitting it in places where they will miss shots they could have made, if you didn't create doubt in their minds before hand. Let's face it, there isn't that much space on the court to hit winners. That is why they are relatively rare. We have to find places to hit that are safe, but cause havoc for our opponent.

To use our model above, that is hitting to Zone 2. And if you are at the net, it is defending Zone 2. Success will depend on how much the backcourt player is able to create doubt in the net player's mind, about whether the ball is going to Zone 2, Zone 1 or a lob. Remember, hits to Zone 3 do not create doubt, because they are to the same side as Zone 2. So continually hitting away from your opponent (Zone 3), only invites them out into the middle of the court, where you don't want them anyway. Zone 3 is fool's gold.

Winners When your opponent really sticks one, where it is clear they were right on your shot, besides laughing it off (see above), all is not lost, because there are no mistakes, only lessons. And when they hit a ball really well, that tells you what they were looking for, and that is very useful information for upcoming points.

If you hit it down the alley and they nail the volley, you've already won. You've got them looking to cover the line, instead of the middle. Mission accomplished. If you hit the ball to Zone 2 and they nail it, you know that they are looking to cover the middle, and you have to look for opportunities to create some doubt in their mind by hitting to Zone 1 or lobbing.

If you are the net player, and you get passed down the alley, remember, they are trying to convince you to give up the middle. Don't do it.

Ego Ego is the problem here. It hurts to get passed down the line. Or miss an easy shot, or it feels great when you rip one by your opponent. Some would say this ego rush is why they play. But such self-centered reactions take you away from your beliefs, and the strategy that, when cooler heads prevail, you know to be right. Riding the ego roller coaster leads to losses that hurt far more than the buzz you get off a great shot.

If your opponent tricks you into the game being about your ego, it is going to be a tough morning on the courts with tons of ups and downs. If instead, you stick to what you know, your strokes and the percentages and strategies of the game, you can ride out most storms. Your opponent's hot streaks will be a minor annoyance, and your own slumps or surges, just part of a day's work and nothing to get too lathered up about.

Good luck out there!

Orindawoods Tennis Club
Junior Clinic Schedule
Fall 2011
September 5th -December 16th

The 2011 Fall Junior Clinics began the week of **September 5th**, and will continue thru the week of **December 12th**. Some space is still available. There are no classes the week of **November 21st -25th**. The 14 week program will be run by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson** and **Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa**.

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

<u>Level</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>	<u>One day/week</u>	<u>Two Days</u>
<i>I</i>	<i><u>Lil' Ones</u></i> (Ages 4-6)	<i>Tu/Th 3:15-4pm</i>	<i>\$150*</i>	<i>\$235*</i>

*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.*

<i>II</i>	<i><u>Future Stars Group</u></i> (Ages 7-10)	<i>Tuesdays 4-5:30pm</i>	<i>\$295*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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*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>III</i>	<i><u>Tennis Development</u></i> (Ages 11-14)	<i>Thursdays 4-5:30pm</i>	<i>\$295*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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*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.*

<i>IV</i>	<i><u>Tournament Training Group</u></i>	<i>Wednesdays 4:30-6pm</i>	<i>\$295*</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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*The **Tournament Training Group** is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.*

***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 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.
- **Tennis shoes required (no black soled shoes).**
- For more information or to sign up, please check out the club website or call Keith or Patric at the Pro Shop , or you can also e-mail Patric at patrictennis@yahoo.com.

