



September 2010
Volume 16, Issue 9

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

Great Summer Program

This has been our best summer ever here at Orindawoods for our Junior Program. More children played tennis here this summer than ever before. Last winter Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Executive Tennis Director Keith Wheeler redesigned the program, and then Patric, Associate Pro Brad Shak, with assistants Emma LaHockey and George Kaiser did a great job of teaching. The format of two hours of instruction and an hour and a half of match play worked great, and our instruction was top notch. Patric commented that he felt this was the best summer staff he has ever had. I couldn't agree more.

Court One

As you all know, Court One is up and running. I've played on it, and it is fantastic! Level surface, the cracks all gone. Windscreens, gazebo, scorecard back in place. The same peaceful, private court feel. Let's keep the court in tip top shape by observing the rules. No black soled shoes that mark, no sugar drinks on the court, no dogs, etc...

Court one does play a bit slower than the other courts at the Club, so be ready for higher bounces, and of special importance, be sure to pick up your feet. New courts are "sticky," and you want to make sure you don't catch your foot and trip. It is the closest thing we have around here to playing on clay, without the sliding, of course. Enjoy!

Pool Scene

While it has been a cool summer so far, it has been a very nice season out at the pool. In direct contrast to our courts, the pool is quite well protected from the wind, and is a nice place to hang out even on one of our typical days this summer. Please remember that there is no glass in the pool area, as well as no running or diving. And of course, the hours are dawn to dark (see below).

The pool will remain open as long as the weather holds. While we can't really say "while the weather remains nice", we may have a nice Indian summer yet!

Late-night Visitations

The Club closes when the lights go off on the courts (doors lock at 10pm). The pull closes at dark. While some of the younger generation think that a midnight dip is really fun (and I was young once, so I can see their point), and since there are lights on the side of the building, it is still "light" outside, this behavior is against the rules. Recently we have empowered the police (I still can't believe you have to do this) to arrest late-night revelers on the Club property. So the police have our permission to arrest you, and you do not have our permission to be here. So very clear. Please swim during the day, when it is much easier to work on your tan.

Breaking Through Your Glass Ceiling

What works at one level, fails at another. It is a harsh fact of

Court Washing

In the summer we have the following court washing regiment. The last Friday of each month we will wash courts 1-3 at 11 a.m. On the first Friday of each month, we will wash courts 4-7 starting at 11 a.m.. If you like to play at that time (few do), then make sure you make a reservation on one of the other courts to make sure that you have a court to play on.

Dogs

Most people love dogs. They can be great friends, and wonderful companions. We are dog friendly here at Orindawoods. We have a nice water dish, and we don't mind them visiting (and, as a bonus, they are considered part of the family and don't need to pay a guest fee). They'd be the perfect partner, except while many dogs can catch, they are a bit weak on hitting. That kind of rules out singles or doubles.

As with any great pleasure, however, boundaries are required to protect the rights of other members. Leashes are important. Please use them. Dogs, friendly as many of them are, come equipped, in some cases, with some really big, sharp teeth. These chomps can be a bit scary for many of us.

Since this is a tennis club, and not a dog run, we ask that you keep the dogs off the courts. Dogs who walk in mud, which feels so refreshing, and then walk on the courts, make such a mess. Funny how humans don't find walking in mud as appealing. While dirt on the courts is not a big concern to the dogs, who don't really understand what all the cleanliness fuss is all about, it does matter to some of the other folks who enjoy a fun game of tennis while the dogs wait outside. Dirt can make the court a bit slippery, and even dogs don't want people to fall, because then who would take them for a walk?

And although dogs swim better than most people, clearly our pool is not a place for dogs (haven't had any trouble with that one for awhile).

Of course, please clean up after any messes that may develop from your pet doing their thing.

As long as those dogs respect the rules, they are more than welcome at the Club. Go Fideaux!

Ladies Leagues

Several leagues are starting up this Fall. USTA Sr. 3.0 and 3.5, Fall A2 and B3, and BALL A3, B3 and Senior C. If somehow you missed the news, contact Keith and he will get you to the right captain. Consult the Club Calendar for match times and court usage.

tennis, and probably most endeavors in life. When we are first learning the game, playing 2.5, 3.0, even 3.5, tennis rewards consistency. The steadiest players almost always win. Even at the higher levels, the steady players win when the more powerful players miss. But at the higher levels, the initiative has switched to the power players. If the power players make enough of their shots, they win. The steady player has little recourse if they too cannot attack. Even the steadier players at the higher levels hit the ball much harder than the steady players at the lower levels. The ability to hit the ball harder is the glass ceiling that many players are not able to overcome.

If two great 3.5 doubles players play two 4.5 singles players who don't know a thing about doubles in a doubles match, who do you think would win? Depressing as this may be for you 3.5's that have worked so hard on your doubles games, the 4.5's would win every time. They just hit the ball too damn well. Good tactics and strategy makes you better than your peers, but not your superiors. You can't make up enough ground.

I remember as a youth, realizing that the juniors who were winning in the 12's (which requires consistency) were not the players that were winning in the 16's or 18's a few years later. Too much success, early on, limits your potential to grow. We cling to what used to work, and fall back to it, even when all evidence points to the contrary. Or as the old saying goes, "when we lose sight of our goals, we redouble our effort." Trying harder with a flawed strategy is not going to work any better, but it is the easiest thing to do.

Most players in tennis get to 3.5, and they get stuck. Unless they take the time to learn the skills they need to move to 4.0 and certainly 4.5, they go no farther no matter how hard they practice, or how skilled they become at controlling the ball.

Of course there are ceilings at every level. Players need more consistency and accuracy to move from 2.5-3.0 to 3.5. The trick about that goal, is that you have to keep developing your power at the same time to have any chance of moving past 3.5 and go beyond.

Consistency and accuracy, like winning, is very goal oriented. You pick a target and you move towards it. Very linear, very straight ahead. First one to six games, win by two. Win the league. Or hit the ball to that place on the other side of the court. Aiming is linear. Point the strings of the racquet towards the target.

Volleying is the one shot in tennis where aiming is king, and for the most part, we keep the racquet pointed towards the target. When we try to create more power, we have problems. When we think aiming, we get very pushy (often in life, as well as tennis).

The problem is, power doesn't come from linear movements. It comes from circular movements. Waves, arcs, curls. Where linear movements are strong, powerful and inflexible, the power moves are light, weak, quick, fluid. Think of the difference between moving a refrigerator, and twirling a baton.

Because the ball is much lighter than the racquet, power comes from speed, not strength. Speed is about light, quick, flexible, weak movements. Strength actually helps us with control, balance, and stability. More on that later.

As crazy as it may seem, if you are trying to move past 3.5, a really bad drill to do would be to try to hit thirty balls in a row in. Serena is the best player in women's tennis. She isn't the most consistent. Other players, more consistent players, can't handle the pace of her ball. If she slowed her shot down to make more in, she wouldn't be as good, because she would be taking away the one thing that makes her different, special, dominant.

A good drill would be to hit penetrating shots that you can make 4 out of 5 times. If your goal is consistency, you will be frustrated when you miss the fifth shot. If your goal is pressuring your opponent, you will understand that some errors are good, and are part of challenging your opponent. A completely different mental / emotional response. One response will lead you towards self-loathing, and the other towards empowerment.

It is a bit simplistic, but hitting a tennis ball is a lot like pitching in baseball. How many times on the radio or TV have we heard, "here's the windup, and the pitch?"

Power comes from the windup, which generally begins with a turning away from the target, a turn away from linear action. The windup, and the first part of the tennis swing, involve several twist and turns if we are going to create any power. Someone who isn't very good at throwing a ball or hitting a tennis ball just goes forward, no twists and turns. "You throw like a girl" is what you used to hear all the time on the playgrounds, though these days, there are plenty of girls and woman who can throw a ball, and plenty of men or boys who can't. Throwing is a skill, how to twist and turn, and it can be learned by anyone.

Of course the problem is, if we are too fixated on the goal, or the target, we won't turn away from that goal or target to create the force we need to be effective.

Another goal that gets in our way, surprisingly, is watching the ball. To see the ball really well, we have to be standing still and facing it (just look at how lines people are positioned vis-à-vis the line they are assigned to call). But

Quote of the Month:

"If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?"

-- John Wooden



Orindawoods Tennis Club

650 Orindawoods Dr
Orinda, CA 94563
USA

Phone:

925-254-1065

Fax:

925-254-1380

Website:

www.orindawoodstennis.com

Executive Tennis

Director:

Keith Wheeler
[orindawoodstc@
sbcglobal.net](mailto:orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net)

Head Pro:

Patric Hermanson
PatricTennis@yahoo.com

Associate Pro:

Brad Shak
bcclshak@gmail.com

Junior Tennis Staff:

Emma LeHocky
Emily Spitz
Victoria Shepard
George Kaiser

Weekend Staff:

Courtney Krakow

Newsletter Editor:

Keith Wheeler

Associate Editors:

Patric Hermanson

***www.
orindawoodstennis
.com***

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

hitting the ball well involves winding up, which is a turning away from the ball. On many shots, literally turning our back to the ball. It is a facing the contact point and turning around that point, where the ball will eventually end up, not facing the ball, that needs to be the center of our attention and focus.

This is why when our opponent hits the ball we need to be balanced and steady (a split step, facing forward) to determine where the ball is going, but once that is determined, we need to orient to the ball's destination (the contact point) and how we turn to create force, rather than to the flight of the ball.

Even worse than facing the ball, is facing your target. If we are thinking about aiming, or control at this point in the stroke, we are in trouble.

"Take your racquet back," and "step into the shot" are two of the worst things you can tell yourself. They turn the shot into a linear motion, when we want an angular motion to begin with, followed by quick switch to a linear motion right at contact. For maximum speed (power is speed), the racquet should only align to the target at the very last moment, and only then, for a brief moment, should we drive out towards that target. On that point of contact, our legs and our core do push like we are moving that refrigerator. This is where the control comes from. The drive. Strength. Combined with the windup, the drive makes your stroke a powerful weapon, one capable of taking you past the mere consistency of your current opponents.

How we get speed in the windup is crucial, or we will never be able to control the racquet and our shot. There are plenty of players who swing the racquet all over the place and can't get one out of three shots in. This won't work either. Remember, it is a windup, around the contact point, not a swing around your body that is going to get the job done. "Always begin with the end in mind," is what Stephen Covey once wrote. We are going to twist and turn in a way that brings the racquet head, fully loaded, back to the contact point at the precise moment that the ball arrives. In pitching, this point is called the release point. Everything we do is oriented to this point, and this moment in time. This is where rhythm and timing come in. Of course the less I move, the more likely I will get this contact right, but if I move too little, there will be no power. Einstein said, "Make things simple, but not too simple." The 2.5-3.5 simplifies this process so much (too much) to acquire consistency and accuracy that power is lost.

Turning is the key here, swinging is the trap. We can create great force swinging, but we can't control the contact. Players that swing never get anywhere, and unfortunately, for all, encourage the pushers to keep pushing because the pushers beat swingers. Then someone who strokes the ball comes along, and it is all over.

It is difficult to describe turning / stroking in words, here on the page, but let me take a simplified shot at it. Let's leave the racquet out of it to start with. If you imagine you are on a tennis court, facing the side fence, shoulder towards the net (left shoulder if you are right handed, right shoulder if you are left handed). Start with your arms out towards the side fence in a circle like you are hugging someone. The palms of your hands are pointed down. This is your frame, or form. How you stay on balance, and prevent swing. If you lean forward at the waist, raise your arms up and rotate back away from the net, then drop your hitting arm down so that your elbow comes into your side and your palm first faces the side fence and then as your elbow slots in, in front of your body, your open palm continues back so that now it is facing down towards the ground and back to the corner of the court. This is a fully wound position, with great potential energy. Now, as your shoulder and body turn your body back towards the contact point to meet the incoming ball, your hand continues to wind back. Your body lifts and turns bringing your hand back towards the contact point, where your palm would be facing forward. If the racquet was in your hand, all this twisting would have the racquet head going very fast. The contact with the ball should push the handle of the racquet back into you hand. The force of your body, legs and core, should drive forward, while the hand remains passive.

If you swing out at the ball you will lose control. You never want to feel the racquet pulling out of your hand. Or as my teacher said, "You don't want things to get out of

hand." You continue to drive forward (push the refrigerator) with your body, while you pull the racquet head back (so it doesn't swing). Your palm finishes facing the side fence that was directly behind you at the beginning of this description. Your elbow points out towards the target. The same direction you now face. Finally, at this point you need to see where your shot is going, and position yourself for your opponent's reply.

So proper thinking becomes essential to reaching your tennis potential. While there are many things to think about and do in the time from when your opponent hits the ball to when it goes back to them for the next hit, we never have to think about more than one thing at a time. It is precisely thinking about more than one thing, or thinking about the wrong thing at the wrong time, that gets us into trouble.

Of course there are many glass ceilings. Fitness, age, physical attributes we are born with, our desire and our determination. Some we can control, some we have no control over. As they say, "you can't teach height." I believe that most players here at the club, if they have enough time and the proper instruction, can play at least good 4.0 tennis. But few do. The physical demands of tennis do not preclude this level of success. Glass ceilings do.

Life, and certainly our tennis playing, is really a contest with ourselves, not others. Could we become the best that we can be? Let's not limit ourselves to a tennis life of being average, if we could have taken it past that, and beyond. Good luck out there!

The 2010 Fall Junior Program At Orindawoods Tennis Club

The 2010 Fall Junior Clinics begin the week of **August 30th**, and will continue thru the week of **December 13th**. There are no classes the week of **November 22nd-26th**. The 15 week program will be run by **Head Pro Patric Hermanson** and **Assistant Pro Brad Shak**.

The Level I and Level 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	<u>Lil' Ones (Ages 4-6)</u>	Tues/Thurs 3:15-4pm	\$160*	\$250*
	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
	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
	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
	The Tournament Training Group is an <u>invitation only</u> class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.			
V	<u>Friday Tennis Events</u>	Fridays 4:00-6:00pm	\$TBA	
	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.			

***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.

Incident 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.

Join us for a great Fall Season!

