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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

Fall Junior Tennis Program

The Junior Tennis Program had an amazing summer, and now we are heading into the Fall session. See all the detail for Fall Junior tennis on page 4. The Fall Program starts Sept. 5th. Join the fun!

Monday Team Tennis

The MTT season is entering its last couple of weeks, and after 808 games played, there is a dead heat between the top two teams, and the third place team is still within striking range. It has been our closest season so far! And the food, the best ever!

Pool Closing Dates

The Orindawoods Tennis Club Pool is open through September, and into October. We will close the pool when the weather starts to cool, and usage is way down. September and early October are often the nicest times of the year here in Orinda, so get out there and enjoy a good splash around for at least another month and a half.

Special to the OWTC News:

Top 10 Things You Never Knew About Keith Wheeler

By Anastasia Kaiser

This summer is a bittersweet time for me, as I will shortly be leaving the beautiful rolling hills of Orinda and heading off for college in Chicago. In the past seven years, I have learned many lessons from Keith--both about tennis and real life. In those years on and off the court, I have gleaned small facts about Keith that might surprise you. Keith and I often joke that I should collect these disparate nuggets into an article in the newsletter. My departure has inspired the article's transformation from words on a court to words on a page. I guarantee that even stalwart friends and devotees of our beloved tennis director will learn a thing or two.

- 10) Keith's backhand is stronger than his forehand. At least, this is what he claims. However, I would caution any player who tries to pick on his forehand. In doubles, he has always played on the ad side until recently, when he discovered that his game was better suited to the deuce side.
- 9) For ten years, Keith was a member of a writing group. He has written three novel-length works, although he hasn't published them. Frequent readers of Keith's tirades about bees, the weather, and transgressors of club rules appreciate his wit. (Or at least, I do.)
- 8) Keith's trademark line, "Winner, winner, chicken dinner!" was not actually coined by Keith. I always felt immense satisfaction after pounding a ball down the line and hearing Keith utter those words. I had always assumed the line to be a clever creation of Keith's until I heard the phrase spoken by Kevin Allen. Amused, I told Keith that Mr. Allen had stolen his catchphrase only to learn that

Bees Business

Nuclear War Averted

What a struggle, but the "Hive In The Wall Gang" has been cornered, apprehended and beaten back without our having to resort to using our nuclear arsenal (at least at the date of this publication). Who would have thought it was so hard to handle (ouch, they sting) a bunch of pesky bees?

This is not to say that all bees have been eradicated from the face of Orindawoods. We tried to claim that last month. So much for human arrogance.

Last time I checked, bees were an important part of the eco system and life in the food chain. And damn hard to get rid of, thankfully.

The challenge is, we swim and play outside where the bees love to roam (though for a couple of weeks, the bees were inside our storage room and even the pro shop. Let me just say, they were not happy). Bees are great, we just don't want them in our walls, and cavorting around our pool.

It has been suggested that perhaps they did not get the memo on the topic. In their opinion (if I may be so bold as to think for a bee), they've got a job to do, and get out of the way (stage notes: all other cast members duck and cover as they buzz by). Most bees are not looking for trouble, they are just commuting to and from work, but like many drivers, it is best not to piss them off. Talk about road rage with a vengeance. Think Porsche with a BIG stinger here.

One of the great things about working with nature and being outside is that it reminds us that we humans are, perhaps contrary to often held popular opinion, not in charge. We don't always have to have an earthquake, tornado, or tsunami to remind us of this. Just a few bees buzzing around can do the trick. I remember the commercial from years ago, with the punch line, "It's not nice to fool with Mother Nature." (while lightning and thunder went off in the background). Not even nuclear weapons can help us in that war.

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.

- Mr. Allen was Keith's original inspiration. Mr. Allen's inspiration remains unknown at this time.
- 7) Keith's first major in college was Electronic Engineering at Cal Poly, SLO. He played on the tennis team at Cal Poly but he decided that the school wasn't the right fit. He was accepted as a transfer student at Cal in computer science, but decided to major in British History. He prefers reading the biographies of great people to analyzing statistics about improvements in median wages. Bonus fun fact: he can recite all the kings and queens of England since 1485.
 - 6) Keith's favorite sports team is Arsenal, a British soccer team. Don't worry, he doesn't call the sport "football". Coincidentally, Arsenal is also Patric's favorite team.
 - 5) Keith's sister, Paula Wheeler, makes hats for the San Francisco opera. This is a little ironic, given fact #1, but don't skip ahead and ruin the fun.
 - 4) Keith didn't take a private lesson until he was--no kidding--29 years old. As a junior, Keith improved his tennis by attending tennis camps and hitting for several hours a day with his dad. Keith would rather give a lesson to an inexperienced player than to a top-notch one. The reason? Keith believes that it is "more rewarding to show someone who can't play, and never thought they could, that they too, can play the game well."
 - 3) Keith has never been swimming in the Orindawoods pool. Never. Ever. Let that thought sink in a little. I, for one, am still in disbelief that Keith has never succumbed to the temptation of the cool water after a sweaty day of clinics.
 - 2) He secretly wants "Ours is Not to Question Y" to claw its way up from obscurity, shoot meteorically up the rankings, and capture the Monday Team Tennis championship. Just kidding! Although who doesn't love a comeback story? Officially, Keith is neutral on all outcomes of MTT.
 - 1) The milliners of the world (including Keith's sister, as we learned in fact #5) will all be saddened to learn the top fact you never knew about Keith Wheeler: he hates hats. Even though he has a multitude of hats adorning a shelf in his office, Keith rarely wears a hat to lessons. Try to recall a time when a hat has christened Keith's head. I know that I tried, since I was absolutely convinced that all tennis pros loved their protective headwear.

Whether you're chatting with Keith on the tennis court after your lesson, badgering him in the pro shop about the continued presence of bees near the pool, or testing him on the wives of King Henry VIII, I hope you're marginally more enlightened as to the curiosities of the life of our wonderful Tennis Director.

Tennis Tip

Finding the Balance

"In every situation there is an answer that is clear, simple and wrong" – G.K. Chesterton.

Finding the balance in tennis, as well as in life, is one of the biggest challenges we have. And there are all sorts of balances to find. Playing too much, playing too little. The right amount of play (recovery), in comparison to the proper amount of work to make a living (see below). The play empowers the work, but too much play detracts from the work. The location of physical balance in a stroke, or movement, compared to where there is imbalance (which is required to move). And then there is the balance between offense and defense, consistency and aggression.

In tennis, we have **two basic choices**: 1) be consistent, try to never miss. 2) Make them miss (or not be able to get the ball back, so winners would be included here).

Unforced errors are probably the most important, or telling statistic in tennis, but we have to be careful with even this crucial information. And of course winners are the most fun shots, and exciting to watch. And tempting to go for, even when it is ill advised.

The trouble is, we, as players, often look for a formula for success. Something simple, clear-cut, that we can put all our attention on and just execute. I remember saying as a junior, "That's it, I'm not going to miss another shot."

The difficulty with that strategy is that in order to not miss another shot, you are going to have to play it much safer, and that means that you are taking most of the pressure off your opponent, and they are probably not going to miss much either (here comes a three hour match – played more than a few of those). Or worse yet, they will take advantage of your more consistent, yet weaker shots, and attack. If they are not good enough, they will miss too many and lose. But if they are strong enough, their forcing shots will either end up as winners or cause you to miss because their shots are too strong. These may be "forced errors," and not "unforced errors," so you have accomplished your goal of making fewer

"mistakes," but you are still getting beat. After all, the real goal is not to make no errors, it is to win.

So the best players find **a balance between risk and reward**. And that balance is situational. Some opponents take too many chances, and you want to be steady against them. Some take too few risks, but get everything back. You need controlled aggression against them, and you will want to make them miss

Quote of the Month:

"It is not what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable." -- Moliere



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by hitting forcing shots.

So **competing is not simple**. You can't go out there and say I'm going to attack, attack, attack. That might not be what is called for today, or in this particular game.

Because errors hurt so badly, there is a general tendency, especially in big matches, to be too conservative ("never miss"). The **best players** are seldom the most consistent, especially in the big tournaments. Over the past ten years, Serena has been the best woman in the world. No one would ever accuse her of being the most consistent. But she has great strategic balance. On the other hand, Caroline Wozniacki is the most consistent player, but when it comes to big tournaments, someone always seems to get hot against her in one round, and knock her out. While Nadal is more consistent than Federer, he wins the match ups because he puts pressure on Federer to miss (with his left-handed forehand to right-handed backhand exchanges). And Djokovic finds a way to pressure Nadal in a way no one else has been able to do (a backhand that can not only hold up to Nadal's pressure, but pressure him back in return: down the line). **Controlled aggression**, not simple consistency or out-right aggression, is the key. And playing requires **constant vigilance** as to when to step on the gas, and when to take your foot off the pedal and even break. No simple answers here. Some balls should be attacked, and some defended with all your life. Knowing the difference and being appropriate, makes a player. Good luck out there!

Tennis Tip

Tennis Vacation Tip

I tried something different this year. I took a vacation when I really needed it (beginning of August), rather than when it was convenient (dead of winter). As a result, I have never, ever felt this sharp in mid-August in my thirty-year career. By August, and the dog days of summer, I am usually dead tired and out of gas. So, there is a novel idea somewhere in here, something like, do things when you need them. Maybe I am getting wiser with age.

I mention this because so often in tennis, we don't take care of business at appropriate times, and it comes back to haunt us down the road. Issues like that nagging weak backhand, that we never really have time to fix, because we are so busy playing league matches that we don't want to go through the inevitable "down period" one experiences when one learns a new skill. Short-term pain just seems too much to handle. So we end up having a tennis career that never really takes off because we are limited by that backhand (or serve, or forehand, or volley) that we never really fixed. Our whole tennis life ends up being a down period. That's depressing.

Another classic is the ball rolls onto your court before you are about to serve. "Do I move it, do I not?" You just aren't that sure. You decide to go ahead and serve, but the whole time, part of your concentration is on that ball. After you miss your shot, which you almost always will do, you know that you should have cleared that ball, but you are stuck with the results.

Most importantly, tennis involves a series of thoughts. There are appropriate thoughts and actions, and there are inappropriate thoughts and actions. There are far more inappropriate thoughts and actions than there are appropriate ones. And the appropriate ones have to occur in a very specific order, and at a specific time. Reasons abound that lead to getting lost. Narrow is the gate that leads to paradise.

Recently I became aware of a very strange phenomenon. More thinking, rather than less, made the game easier, and seemed to slow everything down. If I could keep my focus on the task at hand, get caught up in the moment of what I was suppose to be doing, and keep my mind there, focused and in control, there suddenly appeared to be plenty of time to do what I needed to do on the vast majority of shots. But as soon as I lost focus, and thought very natural thoughts, like "oh s---," when my opponent boomed a forehand deep in the corner, then time became fleeting, and all composure and form lost.

This is a great problem in tennis and sport. Thoughts that are completely natural and human, but not helpful at all (detrimental in most circumstances) creep in, or in many cases, storm the gates of your mental/emotional well being. If we could just do what we need to do, when we needed to do it, everything would be fine. Like take a vacation.

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

The 2011 Fall Junior Clinics begin the week of **September 5th**, and will continue thru the week of **December 12th**. 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 (Ages 4-6)</u></i>	<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 (Ages 7-10)</u></i>	<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 (Ages 11-14)</u></i>	<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.

