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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](http://www.orindawoodstennis.com)

*"I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it" – Celia, As You Like It, Act II, Scene IV*

## **Twilight Tennis BBQs at the Club this Season**

We have two Twilight Tennis BBQs left this summer. The first two Twilights (7/26 and 8/9 were awesome!). The next two Twilights are:

|                     |                 |                   |                       |                    |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>September 12</b> | <b>Saturday</b> | <b>Tennis 4-6</b> | <b>Dinner at 6:30</b> | <b>\$20/person</b> |
| <b>October 11</b>   | <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>Tennis 4-6</b> | <b>Dinner at 6:30</b> | <b>\$20/person</b> |

A Twilight is a tennis social. We play "mix and match doubles" for about 2 hours, followed by our Kinder's BBQ dinner. We serve filet mignon or chicken (please select in advance), plus salad and the fixin's. You bring your own beverage (as tastes and price ranges vary). The cost is \$20 per person for members, and \$25 for non-members.

Twilights are the place to be. We had 37 for our first Twilight in July, and 45 for our second Twilight in August. Don't miss out! Great food, great company.

If you have a non-tennis playing member in your family or party, bring them along. They can just come for dinner. If they are really well behaved, you might consider sharing some of your wine with them.

**To Register:** contact Keith ([orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net)) or click on the Twilight date you want on the club calendar. Be sure to let us know if you want steak or chicken. And if you are playing tennis or sitting this one out. Join us; fun is always a good idea!

## **League Tennis at Orindawoods and Court Usage**

There are some leagues starting up in September at Orindawoods. We have women's Senior BALL, often played on Monday mornings, and Ladies BALL and Fall leagues often played on Fridays. In addition, we will have a USTA 8.5 Combo team and a USTA 55 Mixed team. USTA matches are on the weekends after 11, and Fall and BALL matches start at 9 on Mondays and Fridays. League matches take 3 courts, so if you are thinking of playing during these times, make a reservation (there are no drop in courts during league play). Check the Club Calendar (on [orindawoodstennis.com](http://orindawoodstennis.com)) for the exact time and dates of league play.

## **Pool Scene: The Real Poop**

**The Obvious But Sadly Necessary:** Just a obvious reminder, we have to manage our younger one's bodily functions in the pool. Some would say it's a s---y deal. Enough said.

The pool is open dawn to dusk, through the middle of October. Enjoy.

**Safety first:** no running on the deck area, or diving in the pool. Please no glass in the pool area. No dogs (sorry Rover).

We have a charcoal BBQ available for member use. The gas grill is for Club events only.

As you know, September and October are often the best weather months, so enjoy the pool. Thanks. We'll be closing the pool in mid-October. "Say it ain't so, Joe."

## **Tennis Tip**

### **Return of Serve, First and Second**

The second most important shot in tennis is the return of serve. Pretty much the least practiced shot in tennis is the return of serve. Often we think we are practicing returns when we are practicing our groundstrokes, and while there are similarities, they are not exactly the same.

**The Presentation:** Just take the ball as it is presented to you. On a groundstroke, the ball tends to come to you from a relatively low height, while on the serve, the ball is arriving from a much higher average height. With out any spin at all, the ball is going to bounce much higher coming from a serve, than from a groundstroke. And of course, spin can

## **Paw Prints**

### **Doggie Days**

We love our four-legged friends here at Orindawoods. What joy they can bring to our lives. There are a few guidelines that need to be followed, however, to insure everyone's safety and happiness. First of all, there is a leash law in Contra Costa County, all dogs must be on leashes. There are no dogs allowed in the pool area, or on the tennis courts. If Rover wants to watch your game of tennis, have him sit outside.

I'm often asked whether we have any used tennis balls for dogs to enjoy. The answer is almost always yes. Just check with the staff, and we'll provide toys. Toys are important!

### **Dues Payments**

Please send your dues payments in envelop provided in your billing packet. They go directly to a bank, and not to the Club, or even the Orindawoods Association business office. If you hand them directly to us at the Club (which seems so simple), it just delays everything, and you are likely to get a late charge, and have to spend the time dealing with getting that removed when in fact you turned it in on time, just not to the proper place. Thanks.

accentuate that bounce even more. In more advanced play, the average serve is coming much faster than the average groundstroke. And it can have wicked spin. Managing these factors makes the return of serve a unique and very important situation. One best not left to chance.

**The Stats.** Statistics show that your best chance to win the point in tennis is when you (your team) are hitting a first serve. Your second highest percentage of winning points is when your opponent is hitting a second serve. This can even be reversed in some women's matches, where the return becomes even more important than the serve.

Points that begin with your second serve comprise your third highest winning percentage, and finally, when they are hitting their first serve, this is your worst opportunity to win points (but you need to win a few).

**How Important Is The Return?** You can have the best serve in the world (Isner, Raonic, Federer, Sampras, Roddick, etc...), but if you don't have a good return game, you are not going to be one of the top players. The five best servers in tennis are usually found in the top twenty of the sport, but the top five returners are 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 usually, or very close to that. So you can't survive without a good serve, but you must have a good return to dominate. Near the end of Sampras' career, when he stopped winning all the time, his serve was as good as ever, but his return percentages dropped off. A similar thing is happening to Federer, off and on. When he returns well, he does better.

We are in the golden age of the return right now. Djokovic, Muarry, Nadal, Serena, these are four of the best ever (toss in Agassi, Connors, a couple of others, and you have the best of all time).

So how can we learn to do better in our return games? First of all, practice returns. As noted above, a ball coming from a serve acts different than a ball coming from a groundstroke or a volley. Second, we need to develop a plan or strategy for how we are going to approach returns.

**A Plan:** The first thing to realize is that not all serves are created equal. And there is especially a difference between first and second serves, and we need to play them differently. It is almost like it is two different strokes. Think of golf. You wouldn't use a putter to drive, or a driver to putt. You need different tools for different situations.

In fact, we said that return of serve is the second most important shot, and we could probably define that even further, to say, return of the second serve is the second most important shot. Don't squander the opportunity.

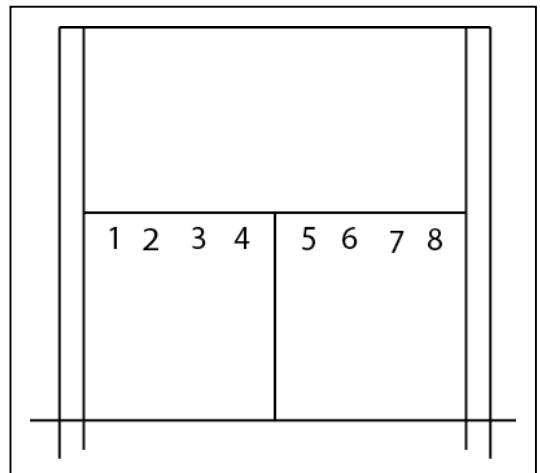
**The Nature of Serves:** Let's look at the difference between serves. On a first serve the server can take some chances. They can aim for the corners, they can hit hard, they can put difficult spin on the ball, and they can mix it up. Basically, all four of the targets (1, 2, 3 & 4, see diagram) are in play, and often used. In addition, all four of the weapons players have at their disposal: time (speed in this case), placement, spin and deception have to be dealt with by the returner. That's a tough battle, one the best returner will often lose.

On a second serve, the emphasis changes in the server's mind to "get the ball in." It is much more likely that the serve is going to be more in the middle of the box (2&3 deuce side, 6 & 7 ad side). It's hard to hit it too close to the lines (1 & 4, 5 & 8) when you need to get it in. Some good servers will hit the second serve deep in the box, but to risk the corner as well, gets pretty nervy. We know in most cases, the second serve is probably going to be slower. So the returner has more time. There isn't nearly as much deception, and as we said above, the placement is more central. The one weapon that servers still often use on the second serve is spin, which also increases their ability to get the ball in. Spin is going to tend to make the ball bounce up more, out of the returner's "strike zone."

So as a returner, you can move forward (serve is going slower), look for the ball to be in the middle of the box (2&3, 6&7). Serves (especially second servers) tend to bounce higher, so hold your arms higher in your ready position. You should be able to get a forehand most of the time (it's going slow enough you can run around most backhands).

**Attack: Take Their Time Away.** The best way to attack with a return is to take the server's time away. The returner wants to attack in a way that forces a lot of errors, but doesn't cause the returner to make too many. So going for a winner near the sidelines is not your best way to take advantage of this weak serving situation. It is best to attack the serving team by taking their time away. In men's singles, the top returners (Djokovic, Nadal, Muarry) often hit right at the server. Don't give them time to get their balance back after landing at the end of the service motion. In doubles, you have someone even closer than that: the net person. Use all the weapons, take their time away (stand closer, hit harder, or a combination of the two), change locations (FH side, BH side), change spins and mix it up so they don't know what is coming. Uncertainty makes your shot seem much faster than it is.

**Percentages and Goals.** In tennis, you are trying to win about 55% of the points. That is the equivalent of winning a set 6-3. Comfortable, realistic, not a blow out. Fifty-five percent. How you get to 55% is the trick. Only about 30% of the points end in an unforced error, so waiting for them to miss is only a good option if you are in trouble. Like say, returning a good first serve. 20-25% of the points end in a winner. That's not a big number, so while you want to hit some winners when





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the situation calls for it, most of the time, going for winners isn't going to get you very close to your magic 55% number. The vast majority of the points, 45-50%, end in what we call a forced error. Somebody misses a difficult shot.

When you are building a return strategy, you want to keep these percentages in mind.

**First serve:** On the first serve, the server is attacking, trying to force an error or a weak, predictable return that they can exploit. So your job as a returner is get it back, hope for an error. You are on the defensive, and so your chances of hitting a winner, or even forcing an error are small. Best to play it safe here, and hope that later in the point, you might get an opportunity to hit a more forcing shot. Or they just miss.

**Second serve:** On the second serve, the server is now in a defensive position. They need to get the ball in, and hope for an error from the receiver. As the receiver, you want to attack, take their time away, force an error, or hit a winner. But not make too many unforced errors (that is what the server is hoping for).

**All Points Are Not Created Equal (Shot Selection).** So here is one of the most important, but subtle keys to success (getting to 55%). You don't play every point the same. Risk vs. reward is always balanced. Since about 20-25% of all points played end in a winner, there are some points where it is best to try to win the point (easy overhead, easy volley, open court). About 30% of the points end in an error, so there are times when you just try to get the ball back, and hope they miss (facing a strong first serve, returning an offensive shot like an overhead or deep, forcing groundstroke). 45-50% of the points end in a forced error, so there are opportunities when it makes sense to attack, and make it difficult for them, but not try something so difficult as you might miss.

**The Magic 55%:** So to get to the magic 55%, there are situations where you might only be able to win a few points, but you want to win the ones you can. There are other situations where you might win almost every point. Don't let any of those slip away. If you played 20 points, you want to win 11 (55%). On five points, you might only be able to win two (2/5). On another five points, you might be able to win four (4/5). There might be five points where you should win them all (5/5) and some where you won't win any (0/5). Add all those up, and you have 11 out of 20 (55%). That's tennis, that's building a winning strategy. If you do better or worse than you should in each situation, it changes the total you are trying to get to (11). So if you win a point in the 0/5 situation, you are suddenly up to 12 total. Play a couple of lose points and only win 3 out of 5 in the 5/5 situation, and you back down to 10. Focus is so important. Don't give away points you should be winning. Going for a spectacular shot when a good shot would do, is foolish, because you might miss the spectacular shot from time to time (win 4/5), and make the good shot every time (win 5/5, thus winning more points). Play one stupid point out of 20, and you go from 11 to 10, back to 50%. Back to being average.

**"But spectacular shots are fun!"** Yes they are. And if hitting them makes you happy, knock yourself out. Just don't expect to win as much. In other words, know why you are playing. To hit amazing shots, or to win? One isn't right or wrong, just different. If you choose in favor of the thrill of hitting amazing shots, then it isn't fair to give yourself a hard time if you lose matches. On the other hand, playing it too safe is just as bad. It doesn't seem as careless, but in actual fact, when the goal is to win points, it is just as wasteful as going winner crazy. Percentage tennis is about winning, not looking awesome. Adjust your view, for champions think winning is awesome.

**"One of the Nine":** Eleven out of 20 doesn't seem like much of a margin, but a 6-3, 6-3 match involves somewhere around 100 points (5x20), you winning 55 (5x11), them 45 (5x9). That's victory. One point at a time. You can lose 9 out of 20 and be dominant. Don't get caught up in one point (their great shot, lucky shot, a lousy error, bad line call). It's just one of the nine points you can lose. Stay focused (11). Don't get lost (and lose).

**And For The Servers.** On the second serve, what makes a strong returner (think Serena Williams here) is that they know the ball is going slower, shorter, higher and it will be more in the middle of the box. Especially on big points, 15-30, 30-40, add out, set point, match point, etc... On those points, servers don't want to miss. Primarily what has changed is there is much less uncertainty in the mind of the returner as to what is about to happen. Deception, or trickery has largely been removed from the situation.

When the server is hitting the first serve, the deception or uncertainty is almost always there. Even if you are hitting basically the same serve as your second serve. The receiver fears that you could always swing one out wide, or pop one really hard, or dump one really soft, at any time. They just don't "know" what is coming. They can't anticipate with nearly as much conviction. This translates into them making many more errors, and/or hitting more defensively, thus fewer forcing shots and winners.

Servers, **get your first serve in.** Especially in important situations (ad-out, 4-5, 5-4, or 7-8 in the tie-breaker). Even if you have to take a bit off. A game in which you make 4 out of 6 first serves (67%), you will win almost all the time. 2 out of 6 (33%) and you are in trouble. I find that in about 75% of my service games, I'm hitting mostly first serves and cruising. 60% first serves is a solid and successful number. The tough games are when you are missing first serves (50% or lower). Hold in those difficult games, you are doing well. Or getting lucky. Good fortune is wonderful, and gratefully accepted, but you don't want to count on it as your primary strategy.

When you are hitting second serves, you have a more defensive posture. You are basically playing for them to make an unforced error (only 30% of the points end in unforced errors, but this is your best chance in a situation where you have to make the shot). Of the four weapons (time, placement, spin, deception) only spin is really in play on the second serve in a relatively aggressive way (b/c helps you get the ball in too). If you don't know how to spin you are really handicapped. At best, you're hoping to keep the exchange neutral, so that you might get an opportunity later in the point to force an error or hit a winner. Even if you start the point at a disadvantage, if you can hang in there long enough, they might make a mistake, or you might be able to flip the situation to your advantage. But this is tough, hitting a lot of second serves, and is not very successful way to win a match.

**Conclusion:** Servers, make first serves (keep time, placement and deception on your side). Returners, attack second serves, force errors (use time, placement and deception to your advantage when given the opening). Between those two situations, something has to give for the bad guys, and you win. Good luck out there.

## ***Fall Junior Tennis At Orindawoods*** **August 31<sup>st</sup> – December 11<sup>th</sup>**

The 2015 Fall Junior Program Clinics begin the week of August 31<sup>st</sup> and will continue thru the week of December 7<sup>th</sup>. There are no classes the week of November 23-27. The 14-week program will be run by Head Pro Patric Hermanson and Assistant Pro Anna Marie Gamboa. Little Ones and Future Stars will be taught using aspects of the USTA 10 and under Development Program.

| <b>Orindawoods Clinics</b>  | <b>Ages</b>       | <b>Days</b>              | <b>Time</b>        | <b>Cost Per Week<br/>One day / Two days</b> |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---|
| <b>Little Ones</b>  | <b>Ages 4-6</b>   | <b>Tues and/or Thurs</b> | <b>3:15-4pm</b>    | <b>\$160 / \$260</b>                        |
| 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.  |                   |                          |                    |   |
| <b>Future Stars</b>   | <b>Ages 7-10</b>  | <b>Tuesdays</b>          | <b>4-5:30pm</b>    | <b>\$320/ n/a</b>                           |
| The Future Stars Group is for our 7 to 10 year old players. The players will be working with 10 and under balls on 36', 60' and full courts. Stroke instruction, tennis games, and match play are all part of the curriculum as we work our way up to the green dot balls and the full court. |                   |                          |                    |   |
| <b>Tennis Development</b>   | <b>Ages 11-14</b> | <b>Thursday</b>          | <b>4-5:30pm</b>    | <b>\$320/ n/a</b>                           |
| 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 thru 14.  |                   |                          |                    |   |
| <b>Tournament Training Invitation Only</b>  |                   | <b>Wednesdays</b>        | <b>4:30-6:30pm</b> | <b>\$410 / n/a</b>                          |
| The Tournament Training Group is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.   |                   |                          |                    |   |

**Non-members** should at \$25 (Lil' Ones, only \$15).

**Pricing:** 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 condition update, or look on orindawoodstennis.com at the bottom of the home page for a court update.

**Tennis shoes required** (no "black soled shoes" that mark the court surface).

**Cell phone** use during class time is limited to emergencies or with consent of a coach.

**Contact** Head Pro Patric Hermanson to see if there is space available in the class you would like to participate in.