



Orindawoods Tennis News

December 2016 Volume 22, Issue 12

Orindawoods Tennis Club: 925-254-1065; www.orindawoodstennis.com

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

Happy Holidays

*All of us at Orindawoods
want to wish you
a happy holiday season.*

– Keith, Patric, Anna Marie

Gift certificates

Not sure what to get the tennis nut in your family? We have gift certificates for lessons available. Give a new backhand for 2017! Check with us in the Pro Shop and we can get you set up for a gift certificate for Keith, Patric or Anna Marie.

Tennis Racquets, Too: The Pro Shop has a full line-up of Babolat racquets, so if your tennis lover is due for a new frame, we can string a beauty up for you.

Reindeer Games

Dec. 11th, 2-4 p.m.

The Reindeer Games (the Rain-O-Deer Games) will be held on Sunday, December 11 from 2-4 pm at the club, with holiday cheer to follow on the deck or in the clubhouse. There is no charge for this event. It's celebration of the season and of the wonderful year! To sign up, please contact Keith or Lysbeth. See you December 11!

Holiday

Pro Shop Hours:

I can't believe the Holidays are here, but we want to inform you Pro Shop will be closed:

November 24, 25 & 26

December 24 & 25

Dec. 31 & Jan. 1

Also:

No Junior Program
Thanksgiving week (11/21-25).

Quote of the Month:

"Baseball is 95% mental."

New Hit and Fit Class

Anna Marie Gamboa's popular tennis exercise class is expanding to a new time on Friday mornings. Starting Friday, December 2, Fit and Hit will be held from 10:30-11:30 on Court Three. Hit and Fit combines drills using our Playmate Ball Machine and fitness exercises on the TRX. The hour long class is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. **Register** for each class on the Club Calendar on the website.

There is still a Saturday Morning class, 7:30-9:00 a.m. \$20/\$25. Fun & exercise!

Court Rules

"Rule of the Month"

Guest Fees and Guest Rules. There are several rules that apply to guests. 1) The first and foremost is that guests are allowed once per week, and 2) the guest fee is \$10. 3) Members are responsible for managing their guests, so it is the member who needs to make sure the guest pays. Some members treat their guest, some guests pay, that is up to you, but we need to collect the fee. 4) A guest is allowed once per week, so that doesn't mean they can play with you on Tuesday and someone else on Thursday. 5) Half the people on a court should be members. So, one guest for singles (dah!), one or two guests for doubles.

6) Guests are allowed on our league teams, if we need non-members in order to field a team. For example, sometimes there are not enough members at that level to have a team, or perhaps we all play doubles and we need someone play singles.

The underlying philosophy is that **the Club is for the members**. If there is a guest at the Club, it should be benefiting a member, or the members, and not merely benefiting the guest. We know Orindawoods is the coolest place to play. Who wouldn't want to play here? That's why we are members and we support the Club. Others can only play here if they are helping us, and they follow the rules and pay the guest fees.

Orindawoods is a wonderful club that is basically governed by you, the members. We all need to take responsibility for following the rules. We have chosen not to spend the money to enclose the property and install an entrance station staffed every hour the Club is open to police these rules. Some clubs are set up with a controlled campus and, basically, a police force (we call them "the front desk staff"). This would be considerably more expense for you (higher dues), and much less pleasant environment to be a part of. Keep Orindawoods the amazing place it is by supporting the rules and each other. We all do our part. Thanks!

Junior Tournament

Last month we held the Orindawoods Junior Championships (Oct 21-23). Over sixty kids participated from Contra Costa County and beyond. Our tournament is part of a junior tour put on by USPTA here in Contra Costa. Each club picks a month and hosts a tournament. Of course our guests simply loved Orindawoods. How could you not?

Many juniors from Orindawoods participated in the tournament. Taking part were Peter Reeves, Ryan Banisadr, Emma Hermanson, Luca Gamboa, Audrey Spindler, Anna Hyman, Ethan Arroyo, Matt Lin and Leo Cardozo, Congratulations to Peter Reeves, who won the 14s Consolation!

The USPTA tournaments are a great way for kids to get introduced to competitive tennis. Of course Orindawoods has some juniors who started with the USPTA circuit and have gone on to bigger and better things. Nico Haet, Sydney Bell, Katie Reeves, Jeremy O'Neill and Maya Harrison in recent years. Orindawoods is a great place to learn the game of tennis, and a springboard to high school tennis, junior

tennis and beyond.

Finally, we want to thank all the members of Orindawoods for donating the courts for one weekend a year, so that the juniors can experience tournament tennis. Thank you!

Junior Fall League

We just finished our Junior Fall Tennis League. We had two different teams, **Twelve and Under** and **Thirteen and Over**. The kids had a great time playing against the other local clubs in the area. Thanks to all those who participated (and, of course, their parents whose support makes it all possible).

Twelve and Under Team: Austin Teodorovic, Colin Norstad, Emma Hermanson, Joe Gonzales, Leo Cardozo, Luca Gamboa, Olivia Rhee. **Thirteen and Over Team:** Alan Zhou, Andrew Patten, Daryan Behtash, Ethan Arroyo, Peter Reeves, Ryan Banisadr & Sofia Gamboa

We plan to have teams in the Spring League as well. Thanks for playing! Keep working on your games this winter!

Tennis Tip:

Three Changes, Big Results

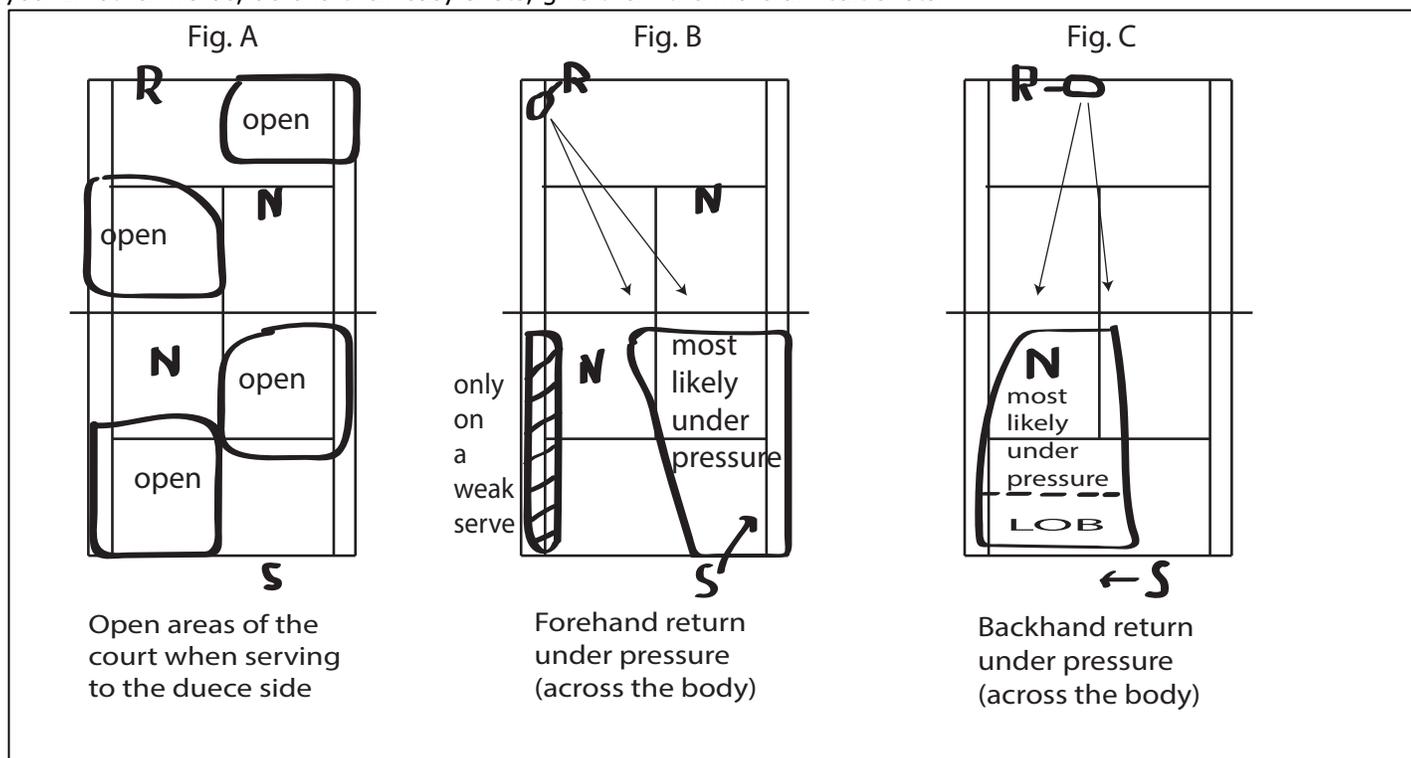
There are three things that club players could do that would make a huge difference in their tennis, and their enjoyment of tennis as well. They are: improving their 1) warm up, 2) positioning and 3) shot selection.

Proper Warm Up

A proper warm up is not only physically getting ready to play, but mentally, emotionally and spiritually. **Physically**, hit all the shots: serve, return, volleys, groundstrokes, overheads. Twenty minutes would be great, fifteen not bad. Warm up with your partner if your opponents don't give you a good warm up. Pros spend 50% of their warm up time hitting serves. Club members play "first one in". Huge difference. **Spiritually**, go over your core beliefs for competition. "Always do my best". "Play the percentages". "Stay positive and energetic". "I love the battle." Etc... **Emotionally**, find your happy place. All peak performances take place when the performer has high positive energy. JOY. Try to get there before you even hit a ball, and then stay there, no matter what. **Mental:** These are the skills that you use to manage the emotions. Practice using your brain to guide your emotions back to your spiritual beliefs. Start before the warm up, get in a good pattern of thinking. Manage your self-talk, your belief. "I can do this" vs. "I suck" has huge implications.

Positioning

Stand where they are most likely to hit it. It's really that simple. If you look at a court, it is huge. Even with two people, you can't possibly cover all that space. In fact, you can probably cover less than half. (See Diagram A). The key is to cover the parts where it is easiest for them to hit it (Fig. B & C). If they can hit the ball into the area you are not covering, good for them. If they hit it into the area where it is easiest for them to hit, and you are not there, shame on you. In other words, defend their easy shots, give them the more difficult shots.



Most people hit best across their body, so start with that (Fig. B & C). Especially under pressure (from a tough shot, challenging match situation, or a place of fear). Second, balls tend to go back the way they came. Angle gets an angle, center to center, short to short, deep to deep. Ignore the exceptions (the random shots), stick to the rule. Example:

hitting a deep ball and coming into the net is kind of crazy because the most likely return is deep (a lob over your head). Hitting a drop shot and not moving forward is equally crazy, because it will be generally returned short.

Shot Selection

Shot selection all comes down to this: "only hit shots you can make" and "if you have choices, choose the best shot for the situation." The situation can be either offensive, defensive or neutral. Pay attention. Be honest with yourself.

When you are **on the defensive**, when momentum is with your opponent, hit the easiest shot possible (Fig. B & C for the deuce court). Don't worry if it goes right to them, get it in. When things are going against you, your best chance is that the other team will mess up. Give them a chance, get it in. You stop their momentum by giving them a chance to miss. Cut down on the thinking and decision making in crisis situations: default to hitting across your body. If you go too big, and try to blast your way out, you will make too many errors and their victory train will just keep on rolling. Don't want to send it right to the net person? Lob, but still go across your body. (Fig. C, tough serve up the middle: lob).

When you are **on the offensive**, when momentum is going your way, you want to keep your opponent off balance. Move your shots around. From a position of strength (first serve, returning your opponent's second serve, when they hit you a weak shot, etc...), still hit shots you can make, but you have more choices. Mix it up, hit to the sides more often (Fig. B, for example, alley shot or the wider cross court arrow). Open up the court, and create spaces to hit into on your next shot by moving them around. Pull them to the outside, then hit to the middle. Pull them into the middle, then hit to the outside. Wrong foot them if they scramble back.

In **neutral situations**, don't do something stupid first. Hit down the middle, get the first couple of shots in down the middle and see if something develops. Then you can move the ball around more (Fig. B & C, arrow that points towards the middle). This is really important when you are trying to start momentum, like at the beginning of sets, or tie-breakers, or the first point in really important games. This isn't playing it safe, this is playing it smart. You can be aggressive, but hit to big targets (over the lowest part of the net, in to the middle of the court). 70% of the points in tennis last 4 shots or less. When you are trying to start momentum going, get your first two shots it and, 70% of the time, you will have won. Winning points, that's a good way to get momentum started.

Shot Selection and Court Positioning.

Of course these two can work together. The master hits the ball to their opponent in a way that not only can they predict the most likely return but, often, they are already standing there waiting for the shot to come back. For example, they serve out wide and move into a wide position waiting for the cross court return (Fig B), or they serve up the middle and move into the middle, anticipating the ball will come back the way it came (Fig. C).

The Other Two Things

These three improvements (warm up, shot selection, and court positioning) are relatively easy fixes that players can do to improve their competitiveness and fun in tennis. Pick one, focus on it for a couple of months, and it will become habit. Then move on to the next. Within a year or so, you will be a much better player.

There are two other things that players can do, but these take more work and more "surgery." The most obvious is **improve their game, their strokes**. Playing well has the biggest impact on the outcome of a match. No matter how savvy a 3.5 player is, a 5.0 player is going to blow them off the court. The 5.0 just plays too well. My mentor used to encourage me to "just play better," as the solution to all my tennis problems. **A huge clue:** most pros, when losing, just try to play better. They seldom change strategy. A slight tweak, but basically the same only better.

Changing your strokes significantly takes time and commitment and, usually, a frustrating period of playing worse before you play better. In the end, you will play much better. It's not a journey for everyone, not all have the time, patience and inclination, but those that take it are not disappointed. And get the last laugh.

The other major change is to **improve your mental game**. Or as I like to say, your mental/emotional game. In other words, using your thoughts to channel your emotions. I wrote about this last month in the Performance Triangle. As a personal testament, I can offer that sports completely changed for me when I cleaned up my mental game. When I realized that the game was mostly mental (95%), when I dedicated myself to winning that game, the mental game. Winning the mental/emotional game allowed my physical game to express itself.



Orindawoods Tennis Club

650 Orindawoods Dr.
Orinda, CA 94563

Phone:
925-254-1065

Fax:
925-254-1380

Website:
orindawoodstennis.com

Smart Phone App:
PlayTennisConnect

Executive Tennis Director:
Keith Wheeler
orindawoodstc@sbcglobal.net

Head Pro:
Patric Hermanson
Patric.owtc@yahoo.com

Associate Pro:
Anna Marie Gamboa
Gamboa.tennis@yahoo.com

Junior Tennis Staff:
Johnathan Wong
Nathan Sharafian

Weekend Staff:
Nathan Sharafian

Newsletter Editor:
Keith Wheeler

Like changing your strokes, changing your attitudes, beliefs and controlling your thoughts and, thus, the emotions you are most likely to express, is deep, deep work. Again, it's not for everyone but, if you really want to achieve peak performance, be the best you can be, this is the way the path leads. "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -- I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." – Robert Frost. Good luck out there.

Thoughts on Being a Competitor.

I'm sure you know people in your life that are very competitive. Perhaps you are. Sometimes people get labeled as competitive, but that doesn't mean they are good competitors. Recently, at the USPTA NorCal Fall Conference, one of the speakers, Mike Burrell, described a great competitor as someone who "loved the battle, the competition, the contest, *more* than the winning." That was the player he wanted to coach. They loved playing the game, and all the stuff that would come up in competition, including the nonsense, and the crazy, and the cheating, and the jerks, the bad weather, the wind, the sun, all the stuff that could go both right and wrong, they loved being out there competing. Playing the game was their arena, the place they felt at home. Jimmy Connors comes to mind here. The ultimate competing machine. Yet he was human, just a man. No one was better. He loved the craziness, and he was a tiger, and he thrived in it all. You can just imagine that someone with this mental set up, this mentality, wouldn't win every time, but they sure would win whenever it was possible. It was often said that Connors never lost to anyone who wasn't better than him. You had to beat Jimbo, he never beat himself.

So someone who just focuses on the outcome, on the wins, actually isn't a very good competitor. They are not in the moment, fighting the fight. They always have one eye (at least) on the outcome. No wonder they mishit the ball, or try stupid shots, or are not in the right position, they are not focused on playing the game.

Former Orindawoods Pro Judy Newman often told me, "when you go out to play a match, expect something to go wrong. Don't be surprised. You don't know what it is going to be, but be ready for something."

When people play a cheater, they often act surprised that someone could behave so. Judy would say, "Oh, they don't think they can beat me without cheating. It reveals their fear and lack of confidence." That's a competitor.

Competitors do whatever it takes within the rules to improve their ability to compete. They get a good warm up, they get their mental/emotional game in tune, they commit to being in good position, they have great shot selection. They maximize their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual conditioning. They "change the things that can be changed, they accept the things that can't be changed, and they have the wisdom to know the difference." – Reinhold Niebuhr

In a fine motor skill sport like tennis, you play best when you are smooth, fluid, relaxed, flowing, supple, springy, full of energy and have a willingness to spend it. In other words, when you are happy. JOY. High positive energy is what produces ALL peak performances. So the best competitor is PLAYING a GAME for FUN. Because that is the most enjoyable way to play, AND the way that gives him the best chance to succeed. So think about those really competitive people you know. How good of competitors are they really? Do they really want to win? Are they channeling fun?

My stepson, Ben, recently failed his first driving test. He is a good driver, but there was something that surprised him on the test and he failed. He was sad for a few minutes, then studied and took it again the very next day and passed. "The world gets out of the way of a person who knows where they are going."

A competitor doesn't let the nonsense distract them from the goal. The small failures and set backs are not a sign or judgement of who you are, but clues as to how to move forward. Or tests to see if you are able, if you are ready.

*Being human is a guest house
Every morning a new arrival
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of its furniture*

*Still, treat each guest honorably
He may be clearing you out
For some new delight
The dark thought, the shame, the malice
Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in
Be grateful for whatever comes
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond
--Rumi*

Winter Junior Tennis Program

Our Winter Junior Tennis Program will begin January 9th. We will have the same basic after school format, with:

Future Stars, ages 7-10	Tuesday 4-5:30	Cost: \$255
Tennis Development Group, ages 11-14	Thursday 4-5:30	Cost: \$255
Tournament Training Group (by invitation)	Wednesday 4:30-6:30	Cost: \$325
Lil' Ones ages 4-6	Tuesday 3:15-4 or Thursday 3:15-4	Cost: once/ week \$140, twice a week: \$220

10% discount if you are continuing from the Fall Session. Check the January newsletter for more details.