



Orindawoods Tennis News

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

Monday Team Tennis

We are getting close to the BIG ONE, Monday Team Tennis. MTT will begin on Monday, May 8th. It's time to register. First, we will take members and then, if there is room, non-members. MTT will run for 14 Mondays this summer. Each week, an evening of tennis, followed by dinner on the Club deck. The cost for the entire summer is just \$50 (\$75 for non-members). A couple of nights you will be asked to contribute a side dish when your team hosts dinner. Contact Keith if you want to sign up. All levels welcomed.

Facebook and Twitter

Welcome to the 21st century Orindawoods! Yes, we have finally joined the rest of the world and are on Facebook and Twitter. So, friend us and you can keep up with what is going on at your Club. There are links on orindawoodstennis.com to our Facebook and Twitter pages (@orindawoodstc). Check it out.

Prime-Time Court Usage

How are the courts used here at Orindawoods? Everyone has an opinion and an impression on the topic, and everyone would like a court when they want a court. And when that isn't possible, we usually say "___ is using all the courts." No names, please. ☺

Well, who is using the courts? Here is a breakdown of the average-school-year week during Prime Time (summer is a bit different: no weekday leagues, more drop-in and reservation courts). Prime time is normally 9-10:30AM, but we offer stats for 9AM-12 noon too, for your amusement. If you look at a typical week, there are **49 time slots** (1.5-hour time slots) **available between 9-10:30AM**, and the breakdown is as follows: 9 teaching, 6 league, 25 reservation and 9 drop-in. There are **98 times slots between 9-12** weekly, and the break down is: 20 lesson, 14 league, 48 reservations and 16 drop-in. As you can see, members have many different opportunities to enjoy their tennis, whether taking a lesson, playing in a league, making a reservation, or dropping in.

It's awesome that half courts are available for advanced reservations, but there are still drop-in opportunities if you didn't get a reservation, or are more spur of the moment. Hope this helps with the mistaken impressions that "___ is taking all the courts." Orindawoods has a nice balance, with opportunities to play. Enjoy!

Tennis Tips:

Tortoise and Hare

Is having a split personality a good thing for tennis? Depends how you mean that, I suppose. One of the fundamental challenges in tennis is that our lower body (legs and feet) must possess the quickness of a rabbit, while our upper body (core, arms, hands) must resemble the slow, deliberate, well-timed and well-thought-out moments of the turtle. We need to develop a conscious awareness of this split, until it becomes automatic.

This **split personality** at the waist is something that no one comes to naturally. To move around one part of the body quickly,

2017 Summer Junior Tennis

Visit orindawoodstennis.com to get the compete summer Junior Tennis Program info.

Ace It! June 24th

Our 15th Year!

Ace It!, our breast cancer awareness day will be held on Saturday, June 24th this year. Ace It! is a fund raiser to support the Breast Center at Alta Bates hospital. This is our fifteenth year of holding Ace It! In that time, we have raised nearly \$200k. Amazing. Thanks so much!

To register: Go to orindawoodstennis.com in the "Events" menu. Or pick up a flyer here at the Club. We want the fifteenth year to be a big hit, an ace, so to speak. Join us!

Ball Machine Club

For \$110, you get unlimited use of the ball machine (when it is available) for the year. You also get a key to the ball shed. It's a great way to practice and get in shape. Ask Keith for info.

Weekly Lessons

Tuesday Ladies' Clinic

Tuesdays at 9:30 \$5

Thursday Men's Clinic

Thursdays at 9:30 \$5

Hit and Fit Friday (1 hour)

Fridays 10:30-11:30 \$15

Hit and Fit Saturday (1.5 hours)

Saturdays 7:30-9 \$20

The men's and women's clinics are drop-in. Register for Fit and Hit on the Club Calendar. Click on the class to register or contact Keith

Pool Opening

The pool is opening on **Saturday, May 6th**.

- Pool hours are dawn to dusk.
- Hot tub is open to 9pm (heater shuts off).
- Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult.
- There is no lifeguard, so swim at your own risk, and it is best not to swim alone.

The complete pool rules are listed on the website. Enjoy and swim safe!

Quote of the Month:

"The electric light did not come from the continuous improvement of candles."

-Oren Harari

while keeping the other part calm, deliberate and cool is about as unnatural as body movement gets. It takes thousands and thousands of hours of practice to make this theory a reality, and few people really master it.

Just stand on the deck sometime and look down at how many people are really moving their feet. Not many. And of those few who are running around, how many are staying calm in their hands and stroking the ball?

Many of us do split our personality at the waist, but in the exact opposite way to what is helpful to play tennis well. Feet tend to like to stand, to move slowly and, for tennis, we need them to be quicker. And hands tend to move fast, in many different directions, and we need them to slow down and move more in predetermined stroking patterns.

Naturally our arms flop around and our feet grow roots. Probably the most common advice that tennis coaches give their students is "move your feet." It is right up there with "watch the ball". Solid advice because, in both situations, our attention tends to naturally drift away from what is helpful. Our eyes are drawn to watch our opponents, or the target, try to guess the result, and our feet like to stand, not shuffle. Shuffling seems unnecessary – "Why would I move if I don't know where I'm going?"-- for most "walks" of life, BUT not tennis.

Think **calm above, and quick below**. Worse yet, biology and chemistry conspire to defeat us. We are generally not moving our feet fast unless we feel threatened. Threatened, we go into "fight or flight", but that means lots of adrenaline. The trouble is that blood flows throughout the body, and the chances of remaining calm upstairs is impossible when adrenaline is in play. So we must convince ourselves to move, without triggering the system that genetically is designed to help us move. This is really challenging. It takes tremendous focus, will, drive and determination. No wonder so many players, even pros, have trouble managing their games when they get "too pumped up." This explains why sometimes someone will have a "flat" performance in a big match. It is not that they don't care. It is because they are attempting not to go into fight or flight, where they can't manage their mental/emotional mix. Their foot is just too heavy on the brake and they appear listless, unmotivated and unprepared. This is not the case. They care too much, and can't manage the chemicals in their bloodstream.

Troubling still, most of the foot movement of an advanced player seems in vain, inconsequential. You split step (see April 17 newsletter), but the ball goes somewhere else. Maybe the opponent's shot is missed, they hit a winner, or the ball goes to your partner. But, when the ball comes to you, if you are moving your feet, both to get ready, and to position yourself, you will play much better. So, in the end, the "unnecessary steps" were quite necessary. **Move your feet all the time**. You never know when you need to be ready, **Mr. Rabbit**. It's the price of being good, the price of doing business. Getting exercise chasing excellence.

And finally, if you move your feet well and get to the ball better, you can keep your hands and arms much calmer, and just do the stroke. **Be the turtle**.

As we age, we are getting slower. But, what is important in tennis is not how fast you run, but your reaction time. How quickly you get to the ball, and then, how well you hit it. If your movement is better, and your strokes calmer, you may get to the ball in a shorter amount of time, and make more of the shots, even though you are "not as fast as I used to be." Keep moving and good luck out there!

Life-Changing Performance

Many years ago, I read a book that changed my life, *Athletic Excellence: Mental Toughness Training for Sports* by James Loehr. The mental/emotional part of competing was by far the biggest challenge for me. I worked hard to improve that.

With Loehr's help, Martina Navratilova turned her notoriously bad mental game around to the point where she could dominate the women's tour for years. Her main rival Chris Evert, probably the mentally toughest player ever, couldn't handle the new Martina: talent plus mental toughness. A radical transformation.

Since those early days of competing, I have maintained my interest in the mental game. In so many ways, I am a performance coach. Tennis is the venue.

When it comes to competition, probably the most often asked question I get is, "How come I don't play as well in matches as I do in practice?"

Today I want to focus on one or two concepts that changed my life, the way I live and play and can, hopefully, help you to play better when it counts and be happier. There are lots of things that go into peak performance: energy, attitude, beliefs, confidence, disposition, physical abilities, skills, talents, the list goes on and on but, at least, from the mental/emotional side of things, Loehr helped me to focus with the following idea:



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Performance is primarily about energy, managing your energy. That is by far the most important element. You need energy to perform, to live, to excel. And the **second** most important concept is **the nature of that energy.** For simplicity sake, Loehr broke it down into positive and negative. The beauty of this teaching is that it is simple but powerful. Remember, this is something you need to be able to pull off in the heat of battle, under pressure (more about pressure later). The theory is easy, pulling it off when everything is going wrong is mastery.

Loehr developed a simple chart that, in two dimensions, tracked your energy level, and whether it was positive or negative (see fig. 1). There are four quadrants: high positive energy, high negative energy, low positive energy, low negative energy. High positive energy is best described by joy (maybe in that top left corner, rapture), you love being there, doing what you are doing. This is the Zone. High negative energy is anger. Frustrated. Low positive energy is a pleasant feeling, relaxed but not very active. Kind of like lying in the sun, taking a nap on your favorite tropical beach. Low negative energy is "I'd rather be anywhere else but here."

We're all human, we have all experienced each of these energy states. You probably have a favorite, one that is easier to access than the others. Here's the deal: **all peak performances happen in High Positive Energy.** If we care, if we are passionate, if we are putting it on the line, it is natural to have times when we end up in High Negative Energy (frustrated and angry). And there are times when we are discouraged and Low Negative Energy beckons ("Get me outta here"). And there are days when it seems like a pleasant place to be, but we just don't have the energy to really play. It's basically fun, but we're not up to putting much into our game today. That's Low Positive Energy.

So, the drill is to control what you think, to the best of your ability, to try to stay in **High Positive Energy** as much as you possibly can. We use our mind, our cerebral cortex, to try to manage our emotions. The trouble is, emotions are so powerful, and triggered by deep needs that our conscious mind can't control ("The trouble with the subconscious is that it is subconscious" – Carl Jung). So, we can't stop these feelings from coming up, but we can try to usher them back into High Positive Energy. That's the game, the mental game. The theory is simple, doing it ... well, good luck.

What Loehr recommended was that you **chart your matches.** Mark where you were on this spectrum at key points. (example fig. 2). **A.** Cruising in the first set, up 5-2. **B.** Bad line call, frustrated at 2-1 in the second. **C1.** determined to control my negative energy, beat this jerk. Much better than extremely pissed off (**C2**). Those are the options, control your emotions or flame out. Determination and will are the tools. **D.** Finding my focus and game at 4-3, closing it out.

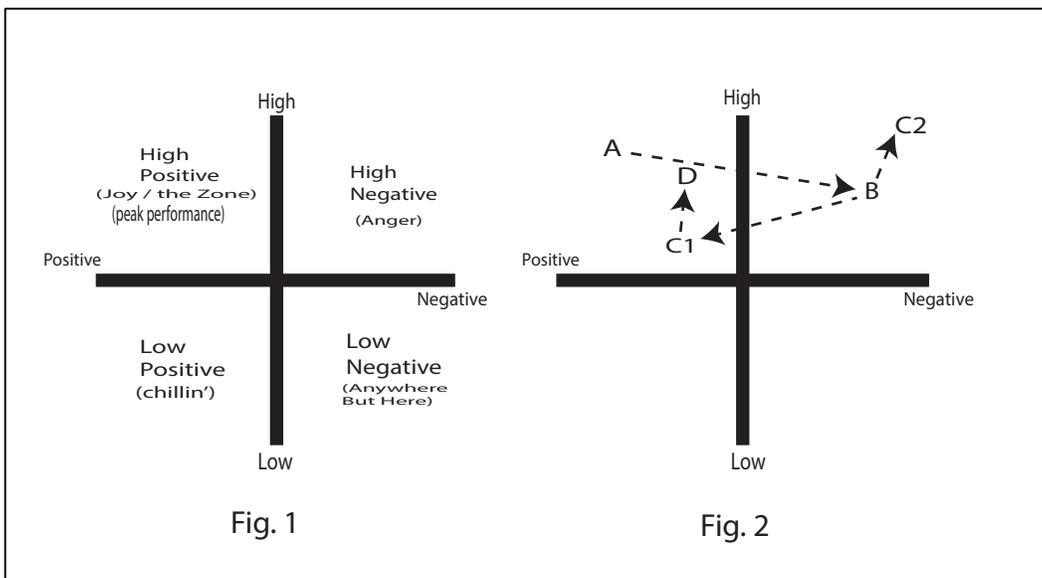
If you make charts like this after every match, your awareness shifts to the mental game, to managing your emotions. Somewhere I have a binder full of these charts from my volleyball career. After doing this exercise for match after match, you start to realize one of the most fundamental paradigm shifts of all-time: **I was happy so I played well, rather than I played well, then I was happy.** A life changing moment, a life changing exercise.

If you get that, **the world is yours.** You develop a plan how to stay in High Positive Energy, and deal with adversity (see "Bad Line Calls, A Plan," below).

Of course, we are limited by our level of skills and the talents we are born with, but performance is about getting the best out of what you've got to offer. Your job is not to match Federer, but to be the best you can be.

Pressure: I promised more about pressure earlier. **If you are in high positive energy, you don't feel pressure.**

That's magic. There is no



pressure. Roger doesn't feel pressure. Just an **opportunity to perform.** Wouldn't that be nice? You can!

Bad Line Calls, A Plan

Tennis is a pretty unique sport, in that your opponent is the referee on your shots. Generally, the idea in sports is to have an impartial referee, but not in most tennis matches (only high level professional matches). Do people make mistakes? Sure. Do they cheat? Sure. In a culture than only accepts winning, only gives attention and praise to winners ... the temptation to cheat can be overwhelmingly strong. It is reported that most Fortune 500 companies, somewhere along the line, broke some rules or laws to get successful. Cheating pays off. Unless it is checked.

In a match, it is your job to check it. And not lose your mind (see Performance above). A friend of mine is a top coach and competitive player. He has a simple formula he follows **without exception.** Did I say, "without exception"?

- 1) First bad call, let it go, everyone makes mistakes
- 2) Second bad call, ask them if they are sure, that the ball appeared to be "in" from your perspective.
- 3) Third bad call, let them know that "we are not seeing the balls the same and it would be best to have an official to help us decide."

Here is the beauty of this plan. To error is human. Let the first one go. Maybe you didn't see well from your side either. If there is a pattern developing, let them know you are aware of it. When it becomes time to get help, state this in a way that is non-confrontational. It's not about them being a cheater (accusations boil blood on both sides of the net), it is about a mere difference of opinion. The opinion is the problem, not the person. "I'm seeing these calls differently, let's get some help."

Why? Because this is about you staying in **High Positive Energy** (see above) as much as possible. And at least getting back there as quickly as possible. It is quite possible that the errant call was made, at least subconsciously, to get you out of high positive energy. A bad line call seldom costs you a match, but your reaction to it often does.

Here's the second beauty of this plan. It's **not optional**. One of the best ways to mess up your mental game is to spend a lot of time, focus and energy trying to grapple with the moral character of your opponent (which is massively out of your control), and whether you should do something about it. This is wasted energy, loss of focus, and likely to land you in High Negative Energy (angry), or worse, Low Negative Energy (anywhere but here).

Have A Plan: People cheat because it works. If you let it. Have a plan before the match starts, and stick to it.

League Tennis at Orindawoods.

A large number of people at the Club enjoy playing league tennis. Sometimes players play on teams hosted by Orindawoods, sometime at other locations for other clubs, teams or parks.

- The teams run at Orindawoods are to enhance the members of Orindawoods' tennis experience. **The teams are for Orindawoods members.**
- **The biggest deterrent** to having teams at Orindawoods is **finding captains**. So if you play on a team at Orindawoods, be sure to thank your captain and not give them a hard time. Stress from all the work trying to please teammates is the biggest reason for captain burn out. Captaining can be like herding rabbits.
- BALL, Fall and Spring Leagues are played during weekday prime time (dictated by league rules). USTA matches are mostly played at non-prime time, normally on the weekends after 11 a.m.
- To have a team, we sometimes have **non-members on our teams** so there are enough players to field a team for our members (This is also true for events like MTT or Ace It!). The non-members are there so that the members have a team to play on. Sometimes there are more non-members than members, but **our members have a team to play on**. This is especially true at the higher levels, where no single club is going to have more than a few 5.5s, 5.0s and 4.5s. Note: because of these demographics, elite players can have trouble finding clubs to join. There is often no one else to play. We want to support the needs of our stronger (and weaker) players, not just the majority.
- We try to field teams of **appropriate levels**. So, a 4.5 team should be primarily 4.5. Our member 4.5s want to play on a 4.5 team, not a team that is called 4.5 but really is all 4.0s. That means that our member 4.5s might be joined by non-member 4.5s before member 4.0s, though some of the higher 4.0s would be taken for sure.
- **All members of the appropriate level** should be able to play on our team (all member 4.5s in this example).
- Once a team is selected, **everyone plays**. During the season, all the players (members and non-members) on the team should play roughly the same amount, given the same availability. (If you are only available for 2 matches out of 12, don't be expected to be picked for both. Captain chooses.) Again, the team is for the members, so members should play, not just the strongest players (who may or may not be members).
- **The non-members pay a team guest fee** (\$50/ season) which allows them to play on the team. It covers the **matches only**.
- If non-members come here to play at another time, they pay the **\$10 guest fee**. Remember: **members are responsible for making sure that non-members pay their guest fees**. Even though they are on your team, today they are not just teammates, but your guests.
- Most people only play in 3 or 4 home matches, so the non-members are paying a higher rate than the regular guest fee. It is not a \$50 membership. It's just for the matches.
- We would **prefer that non-members were members somewhere**, in other words, they were supporting the tennis industry, and not just free loading, using great facilities like ours, and not support them. Sometimes this is not possible, but highly encouraged.
- **Having guests is a privilege of membership**, for the membership. **Guests are for the members**. There are legitimate reasons why someone may not be able to be a member of Orindawoods, but can play on one of our teams or be guests. For example, their family may need a club with a junior swim team, or they play golf, or live a bit too far away to join, but our Orindawoods members want to play tennis with their friends at our Club.

Over the years, we have heard a lot of misinformation about teams at Orindawoods, so I hope this helps people to understand not only the rules for teams at Orindawoods, but the reasons for teams themselves. Thank you.