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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

Happy Holidays

The staff at Orindawoods wants to wish everyone a happy holidays. Keith, Patric, Anna Marie and George hope you have a nice holiday season, however you celebrate, and we hope that celebration includes a bit of tennis. Enjoy the season!

Dividing Up The Light

Well, here it is: winter. Dark days, long nights, some rain and some cold. And yet it is not all bleak, for a clear winter midday offers my favorite tennis weather and a great opportunity to get some exercise when we are often inclined to stay inside (and gain 10 pounds) hibernating.

One of the challenges of the winter season is finding late afternoon / evening court time. Using our thirty years of experience and tennis club know-how, we have developed an intricate system for providing court time for different groups within the club. Of course it would be wonderful if every court in the club were lighted, but then, we would no doubt have many more members to contend with for those courts (and at other times). So given that we only have two lighted courts, we have set up this basic idea: on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday we have lessons and junior program before 6 p.m., reservation play after 6 p.m. (one lesson exception after 6 on Wednesday). On Mondays and Fridays, we teach on court 2 and leave court 3 reservation play. After 6pm, both courts are open for reservations. Lighted court time is all reservation time on the weekends. We know it is not perfect (limited resources and compromises never are), but it is our best shot at meeting the diverse needs of as many members as possible. Thanks for working with us here. By early February, it will be light again until at least 6, and the problem will slowly slip away into the evening brightness of spring.

Looking At Lights

The Orindawoods Board has approved the replacing of the lights on courts 2 & 3. Our current lights are almost 40 years old, and showing signs of wear. The new lights will be brighter, yet less obtrusive to the neighborhood by using more modern technology. **And they won't buzz!** This work is scheduled to be done next August, when the loss of lighted courts will not affect play drastically. We will also be recoloring the courts on completion of the lights work. We looked into expanding lighting onto other courts, but decided that it was not a good time to move in that direction.

Orindawoods Junior Championships

The first weekend in November marked our annual Orindawoods Junior Championships at the club. It is our stop on the USPTA's Contra Costa Junior Tennis Tour. We had eight of our own junior program kids participate (Katie Reeves, Sydney Bell, Maya Harrison, Fernanda Heredia, Johnathan Zhou, Jack Hood, Rishabh Bahatnagar, and Daniel Ginsburg). They joined over 35 other juniors from the area to make several wonderful draws. Saturday we were able to complete all the matches, but rain Saturday night ended up delaying the start of play on Sunday. Fortunately, the Orindawoods Squeegee Team (George Kaiser, Patric and Keith) rolled into action and dried the courts in record time. The tournament was able to finish Sunday afternoon, without further delay. Thanks to all who played and helped out. It was a great experience for the kids. And a special thanks to all the members, who surrendered the courts of the Club for the weekend. We love supporting this tournament series because it is for the entry-level player, and it is great to get kids started in competitive play!

Reindeer Games

This year's Reindeer Games will be held Sunday, December 4 from 12 to 3 p.m. The Reindeer Games are our holiday celebration of all things tennis and fun. It's a chance for us to get together and celebrate the joy of all of us, and the season. We will have a round robin, followed by good cheer! Contact Keith or Lysbeth to sign up.

Pro Shop Closed

The Pro Shop will be closed on the following holiday dates.

- Thanksgiving weekend, 11/24-26
- Christmas, 12/24-25
- New Years, 12/31, 1/1.
- Between Christmas and New Years we will be in and out, but around for lessons and other services.

Remember there is no junior program the week of Thanksgiving, as that week is a school holiday. Can you hear the kids cheering????

Winter Junior Program

Be sure to check out page 4 of the newsletter for all the details about this Winter's upcoming Orindawoods Junior Program.

2011 turned out to be our biggest and best Junior Program year ever, and we are looking forward to continuing the magic in 2012.

We have a wide array of classes for most levels of juniors, and we hope the young tennis players in your family can find a spot that works for them, and join the fun. Once again, Patric, Anna Marie our our junior staff will lead the fun, learning and games.

Squeegee Etiquette

Hang your squeegees up! Leaving them on the ground when they are wet ruins them. They dry out of round. How would you like it if someone flattened out one side of your face? Show some respect to our roller friends, and hang them properly on the fence. Thank you!

Keith's Rules For Playing Doubles

Over the years I have developed a strategy for doubles based on a few basic ideas or principles. I've discussed a lot of these in various articles, but I thought I would just list some of them here all in one place.

1. **The team that controls the middle, controls the match.** Eighty percent of the balls cross the middle of the net (from the mid-point in the service box on one side to the mid-point of the other service box). You want to defend that area, and hit into that area.

The net person should cover the middle, the opposing back player should convince the net person not to cover the middle so that they can hit in the middle.

2. **When at the net, get as close as they will let you.** We could add, **if you're not closing, you're losing.**

3. **Only hit shots you can make.** This seems so obvious, and yet is broken all the time through either over ambition, unrealistic assessment of your abilities, or fear of hitting the ball right to them (which of course, they can miss).

4. **Hit as many forehands as you can** (run around backhands). You have more options, and produce more fear and uncertainty in your opponent. Even players with great backhands (Djokovic), run around their backhands.

5. **Forehands hit from near the outside of the court is the most powerful position.**

6. **You want to hit the easy shots, convince them to hit the harder shots.** Especially on big points and when the tension is high (like after a line-call argument).

7. **The corollary: cover their two easiest shots with your two players.** Leave the tough shots open to tempt them to try them (especially on big points).

8. **From the middle, hit to the middle** (see #9 below).

9. **Most winners are hit to the outside, most winners hit to the middle.** Or, the team hitting the most spectacular shots is usually losing. Everybody loves to hit angles. In fact, you hit more winners when you hit angles, but you win more matches when you hit to the middle. Hitting angles may give you winners, but also more mistakes and puts your team in a more vulnerable position if you don't hit a winner. So hit angles when it is a sure thing, usually when they hit to your alley.

10. **Only think thoughts that help you.** Stay positive and energized. If they win a point, give them credit, rather than getting down on yourself.

11. **Decide which points you are willing to lose.** Stick to your strategy. The goal is to win the match, not every point (which is impossible anyway, and makes you play worse by trying to cover inappropriate shots). If you control the middle (rule #1), you are bound to lose some points on the outside. Don't sweat it, if you control the middle, that is your best chance.

12. **If you mess up, don't worry. Redemption is only one shot away.** The only point you can't afford to lose is match point against you.

13. **You can break any of these rules** (i.e. hit any shot you want), **just don't miss** (this is another version of rule 3, I suppose).

Wagging To Victory

If you have ever observed a top professional player stroke a ball up close, you will notice they look different than the average club player. Yeah, they are young, and in great shape, but that is not what I mean. Their strokes just look different. My first impression is that they look so much more wristy than club players. The racquet seems to be flopping all over the place, and we have all been told to "keep a firm wrist."

That begs the question, why are we keeping a firm wrist, when the best players in the world are not?

First of all, I think it is fair to assume that the best players are doing what works the best, since their survival depends upon success. Why don't we hit a tennis ball the best way too?

The naysayers would say, "Well, the best players are special, they are the best athletes, so they can do things that mere mortals can not."

You hear that one put out there all the time by tennis pros. As noted above, those playing professional do look a bit different than most of us.

But they do have two arms, and two legs, a trunk for a body, and a head on their shoulders. What if the best players are the best because they are doing something right. Something better. Something actually easier.

First of all, looks can be deceiving. No, I don't mean the young, in good shape part. I mean the wristy part. There is more wrist, but no where near as much as it seems. But something is really different, besides the results.

The Arc vs. The Waggle. Most players (who are not pros) swing the racquet. The hand, and thus racquet travels in an arc around their body (see fig. 1). In a swing, or arc, the racquet travels around the body. The body is the center of the action. In contrast, playing pros do some version of a waggle, or part of a figure 8 (see fig. 2). In a waggle, the contact point is the focus of the stroke,

Quote of the Month:

"When small men begin to cast big shadows, it means that the sun is about to set."
--Lin Yutang



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and everything is designed to be lined up and imparting force on that contact point. The pros are winding up to impart force on a point. A lot of force. Contact is the center of the world, not the player.

When you move an object in a straight line, or a constant arc, the object tends to move at a fairly constant rate of speed. Acceleration or deceleration tend to happen on a relatively long path (hitting zone). Instead, if you move the object (like a hand holding a racquet) through a series of twists and turns, it accelerates and decelerates a certain times on that course. Think of a car driving straight and then coming to a corner, the car is whipped around the corner and shot forward (as long as you can stay on the road, that is). An acceleration occurs at certain points merely because of the shape of the race course. This is what the pros are doing to create more force in their stroke. That race course, or curvy road, is the waggle (figure 2). The hand (or handle of the racquet) moves in a figure 8, while the arm rotates in the shoulder socket, back and then forward (figure 3). Of course this is depicted here (poorly) in two dimensions, where this is a three dimensional move where the racquet is dropping and rising, twisting and turning too.

Take the Slack Out. Another way to think of this is you start with your elbow up and out away from you to the side. You then bring your elbow down and in front of your body, as far in as you can rotate it, so that your arm is twisted in front of you (wound, like a spring, tons of potential energy), and then you simply straighten out to the contact point (almost like you were doing a punch forward). Straightening your arm in front of you raises your arm and squares the racquet to the contact point (and the ball).

The Waggle. If we maneuver the racquet properly (there is some wrist, but it is mostly the way you move your arm in the shoulder joint), there will be a tremendous acceleration (when you unwind) at point A, the contact point, even though the rest of the stroke appears to be moving pretty slow. Energy is released on that point, where the ball is, and then it is gone. Only that brief moment, right before contact, and at contact, is the racquet going fast. Before and after, it just looks like it is gliding through some easy, smooth turns. With a person swinging in an arc, the racquet is often going fastest on the follow through, after the hit (what a waste!). But with the waggle, maximum speed and acceleration are on contact, and then the follow through is much slower, and controlled. In fact, the point of the follow through is to stop the swing, not add to it. The whole thing ends up looking like a walk in the park, or should we say, a stroll down victory lane.

Effortless. Even to the player themselves, it doesn't feel like they are really doing anything, or speeding up. The hit feels easy, almost effortless. We all hit balls like this from time to time, catch it just right, but we don't realize what it was that we just did.

In essence, the racquet is snapped or whipped into place, but it doesn't feel like you are whipping it at all. Simply by virtue of predetermined, well-timed turns of the arm and hand, the racquet accelerates at just the right moment. Precisely when the ball arrives. The timing of this would seem difficult, and yet, because the actual movement involved is so much smaller than with an arcing swing (fig. 1), the timing is easier to pull off and repeat, over and over again.

Better Physics. This is playing tennis the easy way. The way the pros play. Simply put, the pros are just using better physics than we are. The hard part is learning how to do it the easy way. This maneuver, in and of itself, is not difficult. It takes some practice, and some knowledge of what you are trying to accomplish. You don't have to be a super human athlete to move your arm this way. It does take some work to get it right, but I've taught 8 year olds and 80 year olds how to waggle. By no means is this skill beyond the average person's athletic ability.

Skill Sport. The waggle does point out, however, that tennis is a skill sport, not an effort sport. You can do your best, and swing like a crazy person, with all your might and attention, coordination and practice, and never be any good. In fact, you can suck. Effort isn't where success and pleasure in tennis is at.

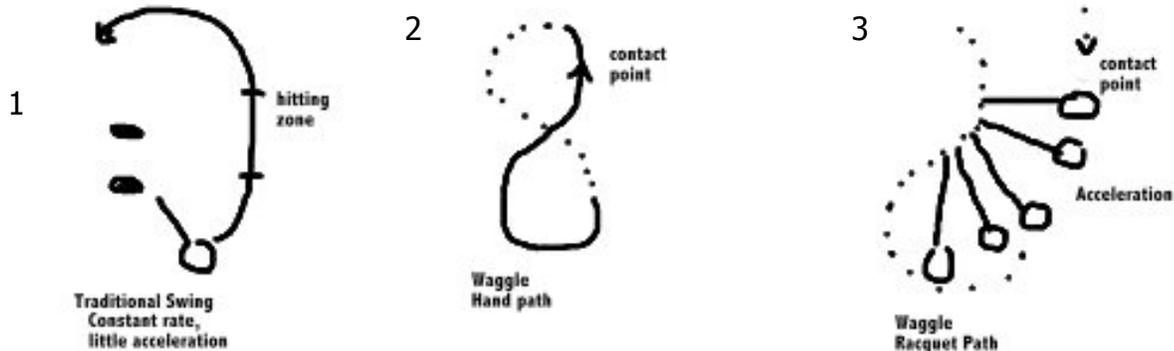
There is great effort in tennis, but the effort is much more in the positioning (footwork, coiling your core), lining the physics up, rather than in the actual stroke itself. Here those young pups that play the pro tour do have an advantage. They just get around a bit better than most of us. But then, most of us are playing doubles, and there just isn't that far to move, so we can line up the good physics too, most of the time, no matter how old we

are.

Ridding the Wave. There is a place off the California coast where the waves come in, just like everywhere else along the shore, but because of the shape of the ocean floor (a long slow trough shaped like a ramp, followed by a sharp incline) the water in that one particular spot is forced up into the air, creating epic waves. All along the coast the waves are 3-5 feet, but in this one place, they can be 30-40 feet high, sometimes bigger. Surfers from all around the world come to Mavericks to try their luck. Physics happens: the same water that is breaking on Half Moon Bay in three-foot breakers is 40 feet in this one spot a mile off shore.

The lesson for us here is, if we shape the stroke properly, with relatively little energy (average energy), we can create tremendous force. And you can have an epic groundstroke, just like the pros. And make it look easy while your doing it. Good luck out there!

Overhead view



Junior Clinic Schedule Winter 2012 January 9th - March 16th

The 2012 Winter Junior Clinics beginning the week of **Januray 9th**, and will continue thru the week of **March 12th**. Plenty of space is still available. The 10 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 / Ten-and-Under Tennis Program. Level III will also spend some time using Quickstart / Ten-and-Under Tennis.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>	<u>One day/week</u>	<u>Two Days</u>
I	<u>Lil' Ones</u> (Ages 4-6)	Tu/Th 3:15-4pm	\$115*	\$195*

*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.*

II	<u>Future Stars Group</u> (Ages 7-10)	Tuesdays 4-5:30pm	\$225*	N/A
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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.*

III	<u>Tennis Development</u> (Ages 11-14)	Thursdays 4-5:30pm	\$225*	N/A
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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.*

IV	<u>Tournament Training Group</u>	Wednesdays 4:30-6pm	\$225*	N/A
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*The **Tournament Training Group** is an invitation only class. Contact Patric about setting up a try-out.*

