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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

A Wonderful Fall

Tennis is on a roll these days, and you can certainly see that at The 'Woods.

Our junior program is overflowing with kids this fall, as more and more young people are taking to the life-long game of tennis. With Patric and Philip leading the way, I can't think of a better place for these juniors to learn the game properly, and get a sense of the joy it brings.

And of course the Club's membership is as high as it has ever been. It is great to see tennis doing so well again, after a few down years.

The latest statistics show that nation-wide tennis participation is on the rise again among all ages over the past two years. The number of people playing is up, racquet sales are up, ball sales are up and play by frequent players is up.

The two primary reasons for playing tennis cited by the players themselves are 1) tennis is fun, and 2) tennis is good exercise. All other reasons fall far behind those two. Tennis is great exercise because it is basically interval training. That means, that your heart rate rises, then falls, then rises again, this is the best conditioning you can do. This happens because you are running around during a point (heart rate rises), then you are relaxing and picking up balls between points (heart rate drops). This constant fluctuation actually makes your heart stronger than if you were just running, and keeping the heart at a constant beat. Certainly singles is more exercise than doubles, but if you move to position yourself on every exchange in doubles (like you should if you are fond of winning), you can still get plenty of exercise playing doubles. And of course tennis is fun. So as far as getting some exercise, tennis is much better than a trip to the gym to walk on a treadmill and watch Oprah or Sunday's stale football highlights or next week's boring predictions. Of course, I don't need to tell you this, you all are in the choir. Let's play!

November Twilight Tennis

Never before in the entire history of Orindawoods have we ever even considered a social tennis event in November, but here we go: Twilight Tennis on Sunday, November 12 from 2-4 p.m. with a cocktail hour to follow from 4-5. Due to the unpredictable nature of the weather, we will not be BBQing as usual, but we will play tennis and enjoy beer, wine and hors d'oeuvres. Several people are planning to go out for dinner following the event, and all are invited. The cost for tennis and libations is \$8.

Holiday Party

The Orindawoods Holiday Party is December 8, 6 to 8 p.m. at Woodhall. As always, we will be serving wonderful hors d'oeuvres and holiday libations. We hope you can join us, and all your Orindawoods friends and neighbors for a lovely evening. The cost is \$15. Join us!

Reindeer Games

Our sixth annual Reindeer Games Tennis Round Robin will be held on Sunday, December 10 at 1-3 p.m.. A fun couple of hours of social tennis will be followed by some holiday cheer on the deck. It is a relaxing way to spend some time with our tennis friends before the craziness of the Holidays hits full force. Join us!

Registering for Club Events

You can sign up for any and all of these events on the website by going to the Club calendar and clicking on the event itself, or you can contact Keith at the Pro Shop (254-1065).

Tennis Lesson Rates

For the first time since 2002, the Club's pros will be raising rates. The new lesson rates will be:

Pro	Member	Non-member
Keith	\$55	\$60
Patric	\$55	\$60
Philip	\$40	\$45

New rates start 11/1. This is an increase of \$5.

Pool Closes

The pool will close at the end of October, as usual. It was a wonderful season, especially during those very hot days in the middle of the summer. The cool, soothing waters of The 'Woods provided much needed relief to many a family in need.

Tennis Tip***The Sideways Volley***

A few years ago, there was a popular movie, *Sideways*, about two guys who were running around all over the place, but not really getting anywhere in their lives. There were opportunities, to be sure, but they managed to miss them or mess them up at every turn. Friendship, love, career, their future, their past, all came knocking, and were completely botched. One of the guys eventually learned something (perhaps, at least there was hope), the other continued in his sideways direction, even when it appeared he was moving forward (getting married). There certainly wasn't a lack of action, and effort, of a sort, but the results were clearly unproductive.

I think it is easy to start going sideways, and to just keep right on going, perhaps not even realizing you aren't getting anywhere, because you seem so busy. I see this in tennis all the time, and especially in net play. We get so caught up in chasing the ball that we forget what we are really trying to do, move the match forward by winning the point.

In the past several months I have been informally been keeping track of the results of doubles points when a volley is played by the forward net person. What I have observed is really quite surprising, and I think very useful. If the net player is able to move forward to volley, the results are very favorable, but if the net player is forced to move sideways to volley, the results are really shockingly poor. I would say that a player moving sideways is only winning the point 25% of the time. That doesn't mean they are missing the volley, often these volleys are made, but they are often weak shots, with the hitter of the sideways volley now out of position for their opponent's reply.

This stunning statistic has led me to teach volleys, and controlling the net in general, in a very different way. I now divided the court into lanes (figure 1), with the idea being that the lane is narrow enough that the player can cover the lane by moving forward, and not get into a sideways movement, that is so detrimental. Movement in your lane should be of a V nature, that is forward, at most at a 45 degree angle (figure 1) if you have to move to the side. If you can't reach the ball moving this way, you should let it go.

That's right, let it go. Reaching is a bad habit, that only leads to more reaching, and more poor volleys. I would rather lose an individual point by not reaching, rather than try to win it by reaching, and therefore lose many points by having the bad habit of stretching for shots I can't make or hit well. I have often noted that the greatest players, in any sport, never look like they are lunging. Jerry Rice comes to mind. Never saw him dive for a pass. He moved to the ball, never reached. Federer, John McEnroe, always in control, seldom awkward or out of balance.

This method helps greatly with the often asked question, "Which balls should I take in the middle." Going sideways, cutting in front of your partner, is counter productive to winning the match. As we've discussed here, it leads to a weak volley and poor positioning. (figure 2).

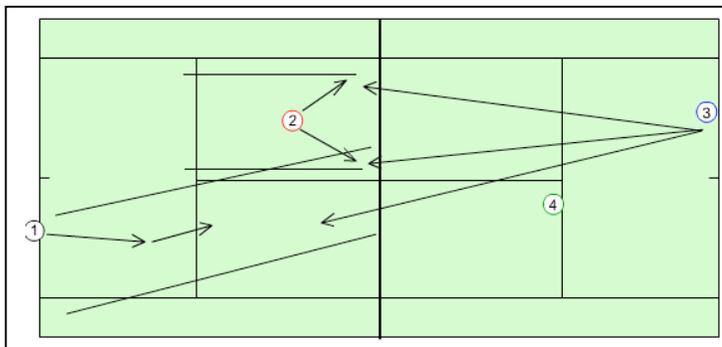


Figure 1

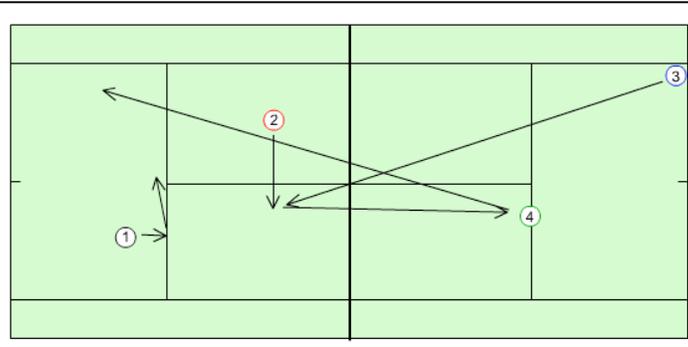


Figure 2

But, as I am always preaching, you want to control the middle of the court with your net person. So how do you do that, if you don't move sideways? Move in. If you are near the front of your lane, you cover the middle of the court (figure 3, player #2).

One of my students recently asked, can you get too close? Of course, if you touch the net, or hit the ball on your opponent's side, you lose the point. So that would be too close, anything short of that, I would say, get as close as they will let you. At some point, you are too close and will not have enough time to hit the ball. But that depends on how hard they hit it, and how far away they are from you. That is where the "close as they will let you" comes in. As for lobs, in doubles, they are the primary responsibility of the player that is further back. One player should be quite close to the net, the other around the service line or farther back (Figure 4). If the back person has to move up, the up person should drop back a bit. The back person can get closer if they don't think the opponent is either in a position to lob, or inclined to lob.

So in conclusion, keep moving forward, let the wide ones go, or take them by being close to the net. Since I have been using this method, I haven't been hitting quite as many volleys as before, but my team is winning more points. That works for me. I like winning. Winning is fun.

Good luck out there!

Lessons From Las Vegas

I went to the United States Professional Tennis Association World Conference in late September, and I have promised to share a bit of what I have learned with all of you.

Two of the best sports psychologists in tennis were there, Allen Fox and James Loehr. I have seen each of them speak several times over the years, and I read everything that they write.

Fox came up with one of my all-time favorite helpful tips, "Only think thoughts that help you." Like most great wisdom, it seems oh so simple, yet how many of us can say that we do that? My guess is zero, at least all the time. When you double fault, do you say, "I love the way I went for that second serve, I'm going to keep attacking and playing my game," or do you say, "Oh my gawd, you're such a _____ing choker!" Or some gradation in between those two. Someone who can "only think thoughts that help them" when they lost the first set 6-0 and playing the worst they've ever played in their entire life, is a rare bird and not a normal human being. It is normal, and totally human to go into the mental dumpster when things go bad, and champions don't do it. They're not normal, and that's why there are not very many of them. My advice is, stop trying to be normal, and be exceptional instead.

Loehr spoke along the same lines, but he used the

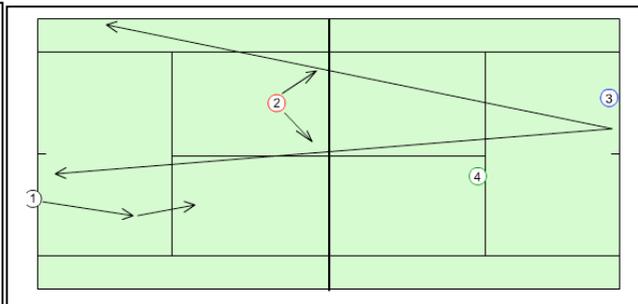


Figure 3

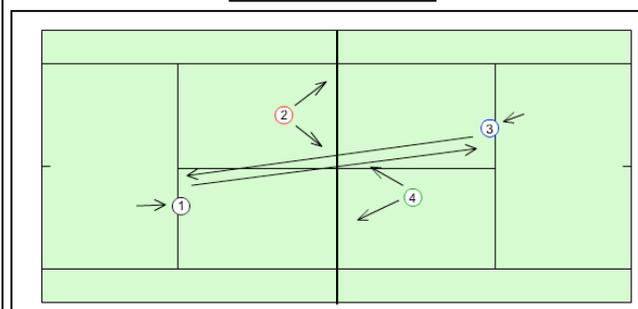


Figure 4

Quotes of the Month

"Cowardice is the greatest sin" – Mikhail Bulgakov

"Coaching is getting players to change their stories." – Jim Loehr



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idea of stories. He teaches us, "tell yourself stories that are going to take you where you want to go." When you miss that forehand that you have been working on for ages and ages, is your story that "My forehand always sucks, has always sucked, will always suck" or is your story, "I know I missed that one, but I have been working hard at this, I know I am getting better, and I know that I learn something ever time I hit a forehand, whether I make it or not." The second story is one that is much more likely going to take you where you want to go. In fact, with the second story, you have a much better chance of winning today's match, without having anything more than your current forehand. That's how much your stories affect your actions.

So that is this month's story from Las Vegas.

Orindawoods Junior Championships

At the beginning of December, Orindawoods will host the Orindawoods Junior Championships, December 1-3. This event will take all of the Club's courts for most of those three days (Friday afternoon, all day Sat. & Sun).

The Orindawoods Junior Championships are a great opportunity for our juniors, plus other kids in Contra Costa County to get in some competitive match play, without the travel and pressure of playing a USTA event. It is a great place to start with your competitive career.

The deadline for registration for this event is November 22. The cost is \$18 for singles, and you can pick up a registration form in the Pro Shop, plus a schedule of all the other Contra Costa tournaments this school year.

Cardio Tennis, Heart Pumping Exercise!

Cardio Tennis continues each Monday morning, 9-10 a.m. It is a great workout (see "Wonderful Fall" article for the benefits of tennis exercise), lots of fun, and great tennis practice all rolled into one. The emphasis is on hitting a lot of balls, and getting a great cardio workout. Students have been burning 400-500 calories a class, so it doesn't hurt the waist line either. You can sign up on the website by clicking on the class you want to take on the Club calendar. The cost is \$10 per class.

Defibrillator and Courtney Crakow On "The Job"

Our AED machine is in place, and Keith, Patric, Philip and Courtney have been trained. Courtney is our new Sunday person, as her sister, Kendall, after four great years, has left us for this thing called UC Davis. Well at least it wasn't Stanford, to be left for the Farm would have really hurt.

Fall Junior Program

The 2006 Fall Junior Clinics in full swing, but you could still join. For more information, check out the Junior Page on the Club's website or call Patric at the Club (254-1065).

Class	Time	One Day/ week	Two Day
Lil' Ones (ages 4-6)	Tu/Th 3:15-4pm	\$147/\$162 (mem/non)	\$224/\$240
Future Stars (ages 7-10)	Tues. 4-5:30pm	\$295/\$320 (mem/non)	n/a
10s Development Group (ages 7-13)	Thurs. 4-5:30pm	\$295/\$320 (mem/non)	n/a
Tournament Training (invitation only)	Friday 4:30-6pm	\$275/\$300 (mem/non)	n/a

Weekly Club Drop-in Events

Cardio Tennis, Mondays 9-10 a.m w/ Keith, Cost: \$10

Ladies' Clinic, every Tuesday morning 9:30-10:30 a.m. w/ Patric. Cost: \$5

Ladies' Playday, every Tuesday morning 10:30- 12 noon, Courts 1 and 3

Men's Clinic, every Thursday morning 9:30-10:30 a.m. w/ Patric. Cost \$5

Men's Day, every Thursday morning 10-12 noon, Courts 4-7, and Saturdays, 8-10:30 a.m. Courts. 4-5