Nastase wins another controversial match

Associated Press

FOREST HILLS, N.Y. — Chris Evert did it the easy way. She always does it the easy way.

Bjorn Borg and Manuel Orantes did it the hard way. Borg and Orantes are used to doing it the hard way.

And Ilie Nastase did it his way, coming through in a storm of controversy. Nastase is always surrounded by controversy.

But one way or another they all advanced to the quarter-finals of the U.S. Open Tennis Championships. They started playing tennis at the West Side Country Club at 11:30 in the morning Tuesday and they didn't get done until after 1 a.m. And they saved the best match for last.

Nastase, the temperamental Romanian who terrorized officials, fans, ballboys, cameramen and Hans-Jurgen Pohmann earlier in the tournament, squared off against muscular Roscoe Tanner in the final match of the evening session. They played for 3 hours and 15 minutes. It was grueling tennis, pressure tennis, brilliant tennis.

And when it was over, after all the booming serves and searing forehands and crackling volleys, it came down to whether one tennis ball landed a half-inch this way or a half-inch that way.

The sets were even at two each and the games were even at four. Tanner, the handsome, blond southpaw, was serving at 30-40. Nastase hit a forehand volley and the ball flicked close to the line. The linesman called it out. Nastase cried out in disbelief. The umpire overruled the linesman. The head referee was called.

Finally, with both players agreeing and the linesman still dissenting, the ball was ruled in and Nastase had his break. He won his service at love to take the match 7-5, 6-7, 1-6, 7-6, 6-4.

"I never even thought the ball would be called out," said the 24-year-old Tanner. "I definitely saw the ball in. It bounced half on the line and as I see the rules that is in."

Nastase's victory boosted him into the quarters against Dick Stockton of Dallas, a 6-3, 7-5, 6-4 winner over Jairo Velasco. The other men's quarters match Borg-Orantes, Jimmy Connors-Jan Kodes and Guillermo Vilas-Eddie Dibbs.

Borg, down two sets to none and 0-2 in the third, rallied to beat dogged Brian Gottfried 6-7, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 in a torturous 3½-hour match. And Orantes, the defending champion, overcame arm problems to survive a 2:45 marathon with Stan Smith 3-6, 1-6, 6-2, 7-6, 6-1.

Gottfried played brilliantly against the second-seeded Borg for two sets in the afternoon before fading before the speedy Swede's sharp passing shots. Gottfried had success at the net in the first two sets but was passed repeatedly in the final three.

Miss Evert, who doesn't waste time haggling about line calls or staging heroic comebacks, prefers to beat her opponents quickly and decisively. She overwhelmed British blonde Sue Barker 6-1, 6-0 in a tidy 45-minute affair. Miss Evert has played three matches so far and has lost just two games.

Miss Evert's opponent in the quarters is Russian teen-ager Natasha Chmyreva. The other women's quarters match Mima Jausovec of Yugoslavia against Virginia Ruzici of Romania, Evoone Goolagong of Australia against Rosie Casals and Australian Dianne Fromholtz against virtually unknown Zenda Liess of Daytona Beach, Fla.

Miss Jausovec beat Marcie Louie 6-0, 1-0, retired; Miss Ruzici eliminated Beth Norton 6-3, 6-3; Ms. Casals downed Terry Holladay 7-5, 6-1; Miss Fromhltz whipped Janet Newberry 6-2, 6-4 and Miss Liess got by Wendy Overton 6-3, 6-4 in Tuesday's action.

The day-night sessions drew a combined crowd of 30,702 — the largest one-day audience for a tournament in U.S. tennis history. And they saw a lot of tennis.

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