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Upset-minded Hingis to face Graf in U.S. Open semifinals

NEW YORK (AP) — Like the rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*, Martina Hingis knew she had to hurry. So late, so late, for a very important date.

The rabbit's refrain might well have been Hingis' lament. She had a mixed doubles semifinal match over on Court 16, and here she was still in the stadium playing singles against Jana Novotna in the U.S. Open quarterfinals.

What to do? Shorten the points, of course. Hingis did just that, rushing the net the way another Martina once did and dancing into the semifinals at age 15 on Wednesday.

Next up is that other Martina's old nemesis, Steffi Graf.

Hingis, named after Navratilova and guided toward a tennis career since birth, beat the No. 7 Novotna 7-6 (7-1), 6-4 to become the youngest Open semifinalist since Jennifer Capriati in 1991.

In the men's quarterfinals, Andre Agassi and Michael Chang won to set up a meeting in Saturday's semifinals.

Agassi, No. 6, beat No. 3 seed Thomas Muster 6-2, 7-5, 4-6, 6-2 Wednesday night to move within a victory of his third straight Open final. Agassi won the title two years ago, then lost in the final last year to Pete Sampras.

Chang, No. 2, beat unseeded Javier Sanchez 7-5, 6-3, 6-7 (7-2), 6-3 in a nearly three-hour baseline duel Wednesday and reached

the Open semis for the first time since 1992. The 1989 French Open champion at 17, Chang is still seeking his second Grand Slam title.

The top-seeded Sampras plays Alex Corretja on Thursday, and No. 4 Goran Ivanisevic goes against two-time champion Stefan Edberg for the other semifinal spots.

Two days after knocking out No. 3 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Hingis put on an even more spectacular show of versatile tennis by taking apart Novotna from the baseline and the net.

"I've played so many matches, I wanted to make some points shorter," Hingis said of her net attack.

Hingis, who became the youngest champion at Wimbledon when she won women's doubles with Helena Sukova this summer, was still going at the Open for three titles — singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

Why was Hingis playing so much tennis?

"I have a lot of fun playing doubles, and I have great partners, so why not?" Hingis replied. The last player to reach

the semis in all three events Novotna in 1994.

Hingis had to get this one quickly, she said, because she had a mixed doubles semifinal match to play with partner Christo van Rensburg, which was scheduled "not before 5 p.m." She would be late, her diness excused, because her singles match ended at 5:41 p.m.

After a 1 1/2-hour rest, Hingis joined Rensburg, but they were beaten by the No. 4 team, Mathias Legg and Leach, 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5).

Against the charging Novotna, Hingis did everything, hitting winners from the baseline, dropping the ball, whacking the heads from the

and service line. All those talents were on play during two brilliant sweats — a 10-point surge from the set tiebreaker to love-40 in the second set's opening break, and an 11-point streak near the end of the second set that clinched the match.

"When she needed it, she came up with a good passing shot or a spin lob," said Novotna, who that she was surprised by Hingis' 33 charges to the net.

"I've played so many matches, I wanted to make some points shorter."

Martina Hingis
U.S. Open Semifinalist

KLEINECKE

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not completely change their stroke," he said.

Although Kleinecke stresses to his players the importance of hard work, junior Monica Rebollo said he does not overdo it. The A&M coach is satisfied with their performances as long as they have contributed a 100 percent effort.

"We don't feel a lot of pressure," Rebollo said. "He is always willing to help and give us extra practice."

Coach Kleinecke said maintaining team unity is the key to a successful season in 1996-1997.

"If the chemistry is right, we can improve quickly," Kleinecke said.

Senior team captain Nancy Dingwall Kleinecke's ability to motivate plays a role in success.

"He is always out there giving encouragement helping me to improve," Dingwall said. "It is his personality to motivate us. He is very approachable there is ever any problem. You can work things with him."

But what motivates Kleinecke to light a fire in his players, besides his strong tennis background and player's coach mentality?

"I like winning," he said. "I don't know what that doesn't."

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