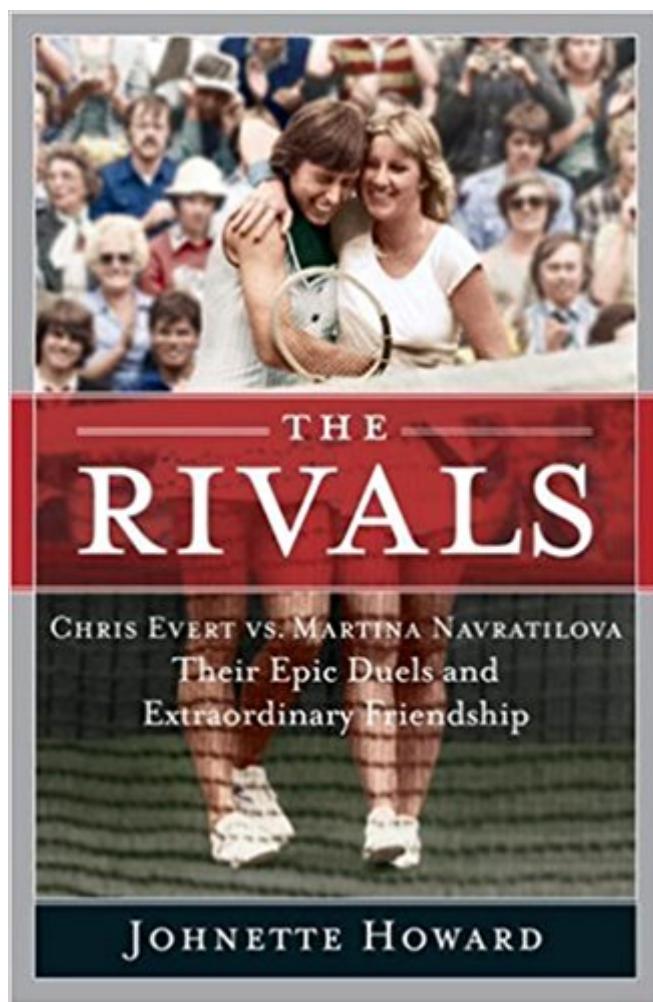


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# The Rivals: Chris Evert Vs. Martina Navratilova Their Epic Duels And Extraordinary Friendship



## Synopsis

In the annals of sports, no individual rivalry matches the intensity, longevity, and emotional resonance of the one between two extraordinary women: Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova. Over sixteen years, Evert and Navratilova met on the tennis court a record eighty times—sixty times in finals. At their first match in Akron, Ohio, in 1973, Chris was an eighteen-year-old star and Martina, two years her junior, was an unknown Czech making her first trip to the United States. It would be two years before Martina finally beat Chris, and another year—after Navratilova had dropped twenty pounds and improved her game—before Evert publicly betrayed her first hint of concern. By then, the women were already friends and sometimes doubles partners, and the colorful story that would captivate the world was under way. *The Rivals* is the first book to examine the intertwined journey of these legendary champions, based on extensive interviews with each. Taking readers on and off the courts with vivid, never-before-published material, award-winning sportswriter Johnette Howard shows how Evert and Navratilova came of age during the rambunctious golden age of tennis in the 1970s, and how— together—they redefined women's athletics during a time of volcanic change in sports and society. Their epic careers unfolded against the backdrop of the fight for Title IX, the gay rights movement, the women's movement and the fall of the iron curtain. Howard draws entertaining, intimate, and myth-shattering portraits of Evert and Navratilova, describing the personal migrations each woman made, and showing how enmeshed their lives became. Navratilova and Evert's ability to forge and maintain a friendship during sixteen years of often-cutthroat competition has always provoked wonder and admiration. They were a study in contrasts, a collision of politics and style and looks. Chris was the crowd darling while Martina, her greatest foil, was often cast as the villain. Chris was the imperturbable champion who proved toughness and femininity weren't mutually exclusive; Martina was portrayed as both emotionally fragile and some fearsome. Chris's off-court life was presumed to be bedrock solid, the stuff of Main Street America; Martina's was derided as outrageous and sometimes chaotic, even during her invincible years. Yet, through it all, the two remained friends who lifted each other to heights that each says she couldn't have reached without the other. Women's tennis now is more popular than ever, thanks in large part to the trailblazing of Evert and Navratilova. A rivalry like theirs, filled with so many grace notes, is unique in sports history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For 16 years, Evert and Navratilova faced each other on the tennis court; they met 80 times—and 60 times in finals. Newsday columnist Howard captivately tells the story of how these two women came together from disparate worlds and founded a complicated though lasting friendship. Evert, the charming, ponytailed daughter of a middle-class, all-American family, captured many fans' hearts when she arrived on the scene at 16. Navratilova, on the other hand, exuded seriousness; her determined look and sturdy frame matched her history, a dramatic, heart-wrenching one that involved leaving her family behind in communist Czechoslovakia. Howard shows how Evert and Navratilova's paths slowly merged, until they finally faced each other for the first time in 1973. From then until 1988, they traded leads, with Evert winning most of the early matches and Navratilova dominating in later years (overall, Navratilova held a 43–37 advantage). Howard is equally adept at covering the athletes' personal lives (she interviewed both players) as well as their competition and divergent playing styles. She also pays homage to stars like Billie Jean King, who was committed to promoting women's tennis, so this work makes a fine contribution to the history of women in sports. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Of the great individual rivalries in modern sport--Ali-Frazier, Borg-McEnroe, Nicklaus-Palmer, Chamberlain-Russell, for example--the greatest was arguably that between tennis champions Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova, who played one another in 80 singles matches (60 of them finals) during the years 1973-88, Martina winning 43 and Chrissie taking 37. As Newsday sports columnist Howard ably shows, the rivalry was epic because both were the dominant players of the time, a title

was usually at stake, together they elevated the game, and, perhaps most important, their sportsmanship toward one another fully transcended their on-court battles. Howard traces each player's early development--Evert in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and Navratilova in the small Prague suburb of Revnice--their careers, their personal journeys, and their classic matches. She fully covers Martina's controversial relationship with lover and personal-trainer Nancy Lieberman, who helped mold Navratilova into the forceful player she became. And Howard provides sizzling reportage of Evert-Navratilova's most famous matches, including the 1985 French Open final, which Evert won 6-3, 6-7, 7-5. Highly recommended for anyone looking to understand the essence of a champion. Alan MooresCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

THIS IS A VERY INTERESTING AND WELL WRITTEN BOOK ABOUT THE TENNIS RIVALRY CONCERNING CHRIS EVERET AND MARTINA NAVRATILOVA. THERE MATCHES WERE LEGEND DURING THE 1980'S. THE BOOK COVERS ALOT MORE THAN JUST THIS. IT GIVES A LOOK AT THE PRIVATE LIVES OF CRISSIE AND MARTINA. CRISSIE HAD PROBLEMS WITH MARRIED LIFE. MARTINA ADMITTED TO BE BEING GAY AND ALSO DEFECTED FROM HER HOME COUNTRY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO ESCAPE COMMUNISM. THEY BOTH ARE LEGENDS IN THE TENNIS WORLD AND HELPED THE GROWTH OF TENNIS TO THE VERY POPULAR SPORT IT IS TODAY. I REALLY ENJOYED THIS BOOK AND RECOMMEND IT FOR ALL SPORTS FANS. THE AUTHOR DOES A GREAT JOB SHOWING US THE HUMAN SIDE OF BOTH RIVALS

NavratilovaThe book provides background to anyone, who witnessed the Evert-Navratilova era, or a history lesson to younger people, who think Selena Williams is the greatest woman player of all-time. Both players had their turn at dominating tennis with Navratilova easing by Evert and Graf as the greatest player in history. Navratilova five year run (1982-86)out-distances everybody in the game. Her 428-14 record during that period is unequaled in women's tennis. Evert counters with a 94% career winning percentage that tops Martina's 89% and Chris dominated tennis from 1974-81. Only Graf is close to them, which makes it difficult to rank them. They were the three best female tennis players to play the game. I think Navratilova is number one because her style of play changed the game more than Evert and Graf. It is a great book that provides a chronological time-line spiked with numerous stories about both women.

This is a wonderful book telling a lot of behind the scenes info of Chris and Martina and both their

personal and professional lives. Author did a thorough, in depth story that will always be for me one of the most compelling rivalries in all of sports. Thank you for your care and insight into this thoughtful endeavor!

A great read!

A wonderful way to learn the behind the scenes stories of these two tennis greats!

For those of us old enough to remember the growth of tennis, particularly women's tennis, in the early 70's through 80's, this is an insider's walk down memory lane. Well researched, well written, and sensitive, it tells the inside story of what (and who) made the two title women tick, but also provides the necessary background for what was going on around them. Fans of women's sports, heck, sports in general, but particularly tennis, will enjoy this read.

beautiful writing, fascination read. i am not even a tennis fan, and this book rocked my world.

Wonderfully interesting; I saw many of their matches both live on the Slims tour and on Tv. It's great to know they are such good friends now!

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