

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

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Thrilling last-bowl victory sets Opononi up

In a grandstand finish, Opononi's Pania Roberts clinched a dramatic 21-18 first-round win in the 72nd Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours at West End yesterday.

Roberts and her side of Tanya Harris, Linda Fowlie and Francis Hau were locked in a tense clash with Coral Lukies' Kia Toa team, which is being skipped by Lyn Bowcock.

After Roberts had shot out to an 8-1 lead after seven ends, Bowcock roared back to take the advantage at 11-8. From then on it was nip-and-tuck.

At the commencement of the final end, Roberts led by two shots. But Bowcock held two, possibly three, until Hau produced a couple of beauties into the wind, which had gathered momentum by the early afternoon.

That put Bowcock in a tough position. She sat on the first shot to take one, and then moved the jack a little to hold three and the game with her second delivery.

However, Roberts, pictured, who was recently named as the Far North intercentre singles player, brilliantly drew down and sat on the shot bowl to take the victory.

It was a superb conclusion to the match.

Roberts' side was skipped last year by Mary Korewha. They made it all the way to the quarterfinals.

But with Korewha playing this time in a Papakura side — skipped by Senara Watt, they won twice yesterday — Roberts is skipping this time, with Hau the newcomer to the team.

Roberts made opening day perfect by notching up win No 2 in the afternoon, 27-13 over Carol Pearce (Lepperton).

All is not lost for Bowcock, though, her side edging Irene Poletti (Levin) 22-21 after lunch.

The only other side from Roberts' section four to finish the day with two wins was the re-

spected Bridge Park side of Lesley McLinden, which also made the last eight in 2023.

Anne Lomas (Hunua) was another of 24 teams to win both games. But her side had to survive a large scare in the morning round against Alison Winter (Central Cambridge) 26-25 after an extra end.

Lomas led 16-4, before Winter came back. However, at 25-19 with two ends to play, Lomas still appeared safe. But Winter claimed a two and then a four to force the game into over time.

Lomas, with Ann Muir leading, had a second hard-fought win in the afternoon, 23-18 over Tower's Jane Augustine. The luckless Winter had to endure a second one-point defeat, 23-22 to two-winner Chris Telford (Hastings).

In the same seventh section, defending titleholder Denise Te Momo (Pirongia) and Marlene Foster (Wanganui East) but notched up two victories as well, but Gale Fache (Paritutu), the joint player of the Dominion in 2010, and Pauline Davy (Opunake) both went down twice.

Te Momo just sneaked past New Plymouth's Liz Corbett in the first round 23-19. Te Momo led by one shot playing the penultimate head. Corbett held the shot there, and in endeavouring to add another shot, turned in a Te Momo bowl to drop a single. Te Momo then beat Diane Smith (Te Puke) 38-24 after lunch.

* The death of Bowls Taranaki Life Member Brien Bennett QSM was acknowledged with a moments silence at all greens yesterday. Bennett, 86, died in New Plymouth on Monday.



Among the more popular two-winners would be Anne Woods' Okato team. After beating Mary King (Thames Coast) 32-12 in the morning, Woods nosed out Marlene Malcolm (Waitara) 23-22 in the afternoon. That seemed a most unlikely result four ends from home, with Malcolm in charge 22-10. But Woods' side took it with counts of 2-6-2-3.

In the same section (No 5), Val Symes (Fitzroy) and Rima Strickland (Royal Oak) were comfortable dual victors and Cheryl Le Claire (Taradale) also won twice.

Strickland's second win came 30-19 over Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga). Strickland, runner-up in 2023, led 29-10 after 20 ends. While Constantine scored nine shots over the next three ends, a single to Strickland confirmed the outcome.

After both winning in the morning, Gayle Melrose (Papakura) and Briar Atkinson (Paritutu) squared off in the afternoon. Atkinson took the game 26-24, having earlier led 10-0 and then

26-17 after 20 heads. Melrose won the last five ends but only with solos and braces.

Joining Atkinson as unbeaten in the third section was Viv Hall (West End) and Leanne Stewart (Hikurangi). Hall's side should have taken confidence in its opening win over Ruth Spittle, whose Taradale side is similar to the one that won the Hawke's Bay open fours earlier in the season.

Stewart, with a bar to her gold star in Northland, is a past NZ Intercentre winner. Her side looked the goods on the opening day. Another good Northland side, headed by Diane Strawbridge (Kensington) also won two.

Leeane Poulson's Papakura side, being skipped by Trish Cullinane, provided the recovery of the day. They were well out-pointed by Frances Parkes (Tower) 31-13 in the morning, but then trounced Cheryl Sharrock (Paritutu) 35-5 in the afternoon.

In the same section, Sue Brady's Pine Rivers (Australia) side lost both matches.

Win summary after first day's play

Section 1: two wins, Elaine Hodge (New Plymouth), Kerin Roberts (Mairangi Bay), Sue Hodges (Omokoroa), Janet Barnard (Rotorua), Rhonda Adams (Fitzroy); one win, Frances Parkes (Tower), Carol Cox (Tokoroa), Leeane Poulson (Papakura), Vickie Clark (Kia Toa).

Section 2: two wins, Diane Strawbridge (Kensington), Andrea Grant (Browns Bay), Meredith Pottage (Mount Maunganui); one win, Barbara Harvey (Paritutu), Cindy Nicoll (Inglewood), Judy Cato (Te Awamutu), Jenny Menhennett (Bay View), Adrienne Tilyard (Buckland), Lynda Francis (Havelock North), Janet Olliver (Waitarere Beach), June Smith (Katikati).

Section 3: two wins, Viv Hall (West End), Briar Atkinson (Paritutu), Leanne Stewart (Hikurangi); one win, Sue Kingi (Raglan), Dot Collis (Waitarere Beach), Ruth Spittle (Taradale), Martie Sisson (Ohope), Gayle Melrose (Papakura), Jenny Sargison (Omarunui).

Section 4: two wins, Lesley McLinden (Bridge Park), Pania Roberts (Opononi); one win,

Frances Busby (Tower), Margaret O'Regan (Ohope), Jilly Kimber (Waitara), Robyn Wallace (Omarunui), Hazel Littlejohn (Darfield), Carol Pearce (Lepperton), Coral Lukies (Kia Toa), Gloria Shaw (Paritutu).

Section 5: two wins, Anne Woods (Okato), Rima Strickland (Royal Oak), Val Symes (Fitzroy), Cheryl Le Claire (Taradale); one win, Mary King (Thames Coast), Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga), Hetty Bolscher (Pukekohe), Marlene Malcolm (Waitara).

Section 6: two wins, Senara Watt (Papakura), Kaye Bunn (Thames Coast), Wendy Morrati (Lepperton); one win, Kristin Stampa (Hāwera Park), Heather Gilbert (Tauranga South), Jackie Morgan (Kia Toa), Diane Dickinson (Henderson), Fane Vessey (Paraparaumu Beach), Cathy Andrews (Paritutu).

Section 7: two wins, Anne Lomas (Hunua), Chris Telford (Hastings), Denise Te Momo (Pirongia), Marlene Foster (Wanganui East); one win, Liz Corbett (New Plymouth), Diane Smith (Te Puke), Lee McDonald (Mercury Bay), Jane Augustine (Tower).