

# Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

*Tuesday, January 21, 2025*

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## Plimmerton break 20 year drought in style

After an absence of 20 years, the Plimmerton Bowling Club is again represented in the Midlands Funds Management Taranaki men's Open fours tournament.

And the club made a statement in style yesterday when both its sides won twice.

They are two of the 51 sides to open in an ideal manner, from a field of 180. Another Wellington club, Johnsonville, also excelled. From its magnificent entry of seven teams, five are unbeaten.

The Plimmerton sides, both playing in section seven at New Plymouth No 1, comprise Dudley Enoka, Rohan Cuff, Jason Wright and David Wright in one team, and Steve McCormick, Con Curtin, Brian Kell and Graham Down in the other.

The Curtin and Down names are, of course, well known from Plimmerton, with Con and Graham's respective sons, Seamus and Bradley, noted performers.

The last Plimmerton side to enter the Open was Jimmy Gould in 2005. Gould's side had previously finished runner-up in 1995.

The Down side opened with a 30-23 win over Tower's Ian Busy, a semifinalist in the Taranaki centre fours in November, and then

## Hassall starts his 50th Open

As part of the official opening of the 120th Midlands Funds Management Taranaki men's Open fours there was a special presentation made to Paritutu's Rodger Hassall, who is appearing in his 50th tournament.

New Plymouth District Councillor Gordon Travis Brown, who officially opened the tournament, summed up Hassall as one of the nicest people you could play bowls with or against and as a gentleman.

"And the Hassall family deserves one of them. So, well done, Rodger!" Brown added.

sneaked home 22-20 over Graeme Goss (Mercury Bay) in the afternoon.

The Wright side beat Paritutu's Trevor Johns, also a Taranaki centre fours semifinalist, 23-22 in a tight morning clash, after leading by two shots playing the last end.

The afternoon had plenty of the predicted twists and turns, as Wright's team upset Dan Dickison (Tauranga) 31-19. It was a result that was not predicted, especially after Dickison's good side had earlier trounced Kelvin Bishop (Inglewood) 42-6.

Even after 14 ends, with Dickison in front 17-10, the indicators still pointed to a Tauranga win. But Wright responded with counts of 4-2-4-2 to take the lead 22-17. Dickison pulled back two on the 19th, but Wright went away again with 2-3-3-1 scores to clinch the match.

Perhaps the result was not as big a surprise, though, with the Plimmerton club on the rise and Jason Wright and Enoka winning the Wellington champion-of-champions triples last season.



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## Delany drops both matches on opening day

The double defeat of four-time champion Dan Delany (Royal Oak) was the main talking point among the performances of the leading teams on the first day's play in the Taranaki Open fours.

Delany's side, which was skipped in the opening round by Teo Turua, was beaten by Colin Christie (Fitzroy) 24-23.

Delany took over the skipping in the afternoon, but things didn't improve, with the side being walloped by Dave Walker (Tahunanui) 19-1 in a game limited to just 13 ends.

All is not lost for Delany, though, who illustrated earlier in the season that he can still bowl when he won the Auckland open fours.

His side does need to win the rest of its games, something Delany is not unfamiliar with. In his first Taranaki Open, in 1998, his side lost its first two qualifying games, but won the next six to make it through before falling in the semifinals.

The following year, Delany again lost his opening two games, before winning the next six sectional matches and all six post section games to take the title for the first time.

While Christie didn't manage to back up the morning's effort, losing 29-16 to two-winner Wayne Te Huki, skipping a Okaihau side, Walker's side did — but only just.

In the only morning round game not completed, Walker and Takapuna's Gerry Belcher, fresh from competing in the Burnside Pairs, were locked at 26-all after the regulation 25 ends and the 1.30pm time limit had expired.

The two teams returned after the completion of their round two games, with Walker getting the nod. Belcher did have some consolation by then, however, having won in the afternoon round.

Another past winner to also suffer double disappointment was Phil Corney (Durie Hill), whose side was skipped by the 2019 Dominion fours winner, Gavin Scrivener.

The Whanganui side rattled home from 23-12 down against Steve Cottam (Paritutu) in the morning but still fell short 26-23. In the afternoon the team let a handy eight-point lead disappear on the home straight, losing to Trevor Johns 28-27.

Another of the upsets on day one was the 25-8 afternoon defeat of three-time winner, Craig De Faria (West End). De Faria fell to David Ball (Carlton Cornwall).

Ball had lost 24-23 to Upper Hutt's Alan Child on an extra end in the morning, while De Faria had beaten Russell Terrey (Aramoho) 28-16.

Another leading Taranaki side, Grant Anderson (Tower), also finished with a 50% record.

His side lost 27-21 in the afternoon to Regan Larkin (Fairfield) after earlier squeaking through on the last bowl 20-18 over the luckless Phill Chisholm (Takapuna).

It was a much-needed victory for Larkin's Dunedin side after it had lost 33-20 in round one to John Garrud (West End). Larkin was in touch at five behind with four ends remaining, but a five on the next head sealed the result in Garrud's favour.

Defending champion Darren Goodin was required to produce two excellent pressure draw shots to get home 21-19 in the first round against Allan Sandercock (Sunshine Coast).

Goodin led by three playing the last end. Two down, he drew second shot with his first bowl. Sandercock in turn sat the bowl through to lie three. However, Goodin coolly drew second shot to take the win.

Goodin then beat Frankton Junction's Brian Osmond 24-7, after the latter had lost on the last bowl of an extra end to Piripi Huwyler 28-27 in the morning.

Elsewhere a number of teams eased into the competition with two strong wins.

That included Aramoho's Peter Belliss who was playing on the Stratford-Avon green that same rated as the finest they have enjoyed in years.

In the same section Gavin Brown (Royal Oak) also made a positive start as did home town hope Paul Digby.

Simon Poppleton (Takapuna) also ended the day unbeaten, but it was close. His side needed an extra end to pip Ash Paul (Darfield) 28-26 and then edged Child 24-23.

Don Parker, skipping Roger Sutton's Carlton Cornwall side produced a brilliant last bowl to win in the morning. The side then made it two in the afternoon.

## Australians get one over the USA

In the big international game at the Open yesterday, the Australian side, headed by Ian Hosken (Clayton, Victoria) managed to get one over the USA side skipped by Peter Ritchie (Oaks North, California) 30-21 on the Paritutu B green.

Hosken's side of Roger Scott, Dennis Thorp and Mitch Taylor looked impressive during the day. It had earlier thumped John Dunlop (Palmerston North) 36-8.

Ritchie showed plenty of grit in over coming two early defeats in the Dominion singles earlier in the month and then coming to within a point of qualifying. That same determination will be required again in the Open. His side of Dave Morrison and Kiwis Kevin Hills and Paul Bartosh were earlier pipped at the post by four-time Thames Valley bowler of the year, Mark Mathews 21-20, in the morning round, after leading for most of the match.



Four of the other five Australian sides managed to win one game on the day, including Peter Perhouse (Gladstone) who, after leading 17-5, dropped four on the last end to lose 24-22 to the unbeaten Glen Richie (Blockhouse Bay).

## Teams winning two games on the first day

**Teams with two wins after the opening day's play yesterday:**

**Section 1:** Darren Goodin (Paritutu), Peter Small (Hutt), Tupu Campbell (Opononi).

**Section 2:** Logan Amer (Johnsonville), Mark Mathews (Tui Park), Ian Hosken (Clayton), Phil Todd (Johnsonville), Alex Reed (Ponsonby), Scott Roberts (Tower).

**Section 3:** Neil Earley (Inglewood), Neville Hill (Onehunga & Districts), Richard Helms (New Plymouth).

**Section 4:** John Garrud (West End), Billy Fulton (Henderson), Allan Peers (Thames), Malcolm Moore (Frankton Junction).

**Section 5:** Andy Ellis (Pringle Park), Roger Sutton (Carlton Cornwall), Mike Oldfield (Tauranga South).

**Section 6:** Wayne Te Huki (Okaihau), Dave Walker (Tahunanui), Ray Scott (Kia Toa), Gareth Evans (Johnsonville), Garry Petersen (Wanganui East).

**Section 7:** Pat Walklin (Oakura), Graham

Down (Plimmerton), Daniel Geaney (Blockhouse Bay), David Wright (Plimmerton).

**Section 8:** Graeme Crawford (Pohara), Grant Wakefield (Johnsonville), Grant Pease (Fitzroy), Glen Riche (Blockhouse Bay).

**Section 9:** Michael Paton (Orewa), Ross Thorn (Naenae), Frankie Lim (Pukekohe), Danny O'Sullivan (Inglewood).

**Section 10:** Colin Cherri (North End), Joe Hunn (Kia Toa), Gavin Hamlyn (Martinborough), Scott Johnson (Tawa).

**Section 11:** Les Smith (Wanganui East), Petar Sain (Carlton Cornwall), Paul Eaton (Mt Maunganui), John Petelo (Pt Chevalier), Mark Dudley (Hawera Park).

**Section 12:** Simon Poppleton (Takapuna), Mike Ansell (Bulls), Naki Nehemia (Johnsonville).

**Section 13:** Gavin Brown (Royal Oak), Paul Digby (Stratford Avon), Peter Belliss (Aramoho).



## 75 years ago: Mort Squire wins second Open

Taranaki's greatest ever bowler, Mort Squire, pictured right, skipped his Hawera side to victory in the 1950 Open.

Having previously won in 1942, Squire was operating at the peak of his powers at the time and it remains a mystery to this day that he was not selected for the New Zealand side for the Auckland Empire Games, which commenced soon after the completion of the Open.

A "dicky" heart was one such theory, although personalities and politics were prevalent away back then also.

However, there was no denying the class of Squire both as a player and skip. His four of William Hay, Charles Bathgate — both largely unknown outside of Hawera — and Louis Walsh won the final from a Tauranga four of Jack Ross, Norm Ward, Tom Milne and skip Bernie Peters 19-14.

Peters had won the Open in 1937 leading for Inglewood's Fred Spurdle and would go on to be a top player until the late 1980s. His side had entered the tournament as a "holiday outing".

Squire's victory was achieved with both post section lives still in tact, although he had grand battles in the two proceeding rounds against two other fine skips in the history of



the Open — Roy Boulton and Ron Buchan. Squire prevailed 17-14 in both matches. A feature of the Squire-Boulton game, which was 14-all when the time-limit expired, was the number of burnt heads.

This included five in a row, with Squire killing three and Boulton two. One hundred and ninety-six teams contested the event, with 41 qualifying.

Jack King and Charles Finch (Putaruru) won the pairs.

### Match of the morning — Roberts v Reed

There are a number of matches this morning where two two-winners play and one such clash will occur in section two at Waitara between Alex Reed (Ponsonby) and Scott Roberts (Tower).

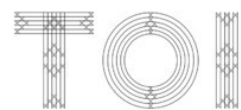
Reed is best known as the chief broadcaster for Bowls NZ but he is also a highly accomplished bowler. His side of Mark Nielsen, John Aufai and Bowls NZ CEO Mark Cameron won both games comfortably — 24-17 against Colin Gardiner (Waitarere Beach) and 24-15 over Craig Nutt (Waimea). Roberts' side of Mark Kuklinski, Kelly Hill and John Roberts managed to hold on in the morning, despite dropping a late five, to beat Mort Jones (Frankton Junction) 26-24 and then prevailed 27-18 over Colin Williams (Riverhead).



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