

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

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Eighteen unbeaten; 60 dreaming about 2026

Just 18 teams have maintained unbeaten records after the second day's play in the Midlands Funds Management Taranaki men's Open fours yesterday.

But for 60 teams, one-third of the field, the dreams have turned to 2026, long term at least; or to being the upsetter for the next two days before the pairs start on Friday.

There are 61 sides on two wins and 41 teams have won three matches.

Heading the list of the teams with four wins is Aramoho's Peter Belliss.

Belliss' remains a big threat in any tournament he enters. And while his side of Ray Wilson, Lance Tasker and Keith Slight exited on Friday morning last year, they have started 2025 brilliantly.

After beating Gary Barber (Paritutu), who was part of the runner-up side in 2023, 31-16 in the morning, Belliss met a Royal Oak side entered under the name of Gavin Brown but skipped by Steve Fisher.

Fisher, who led in Michael Galloway's winning Dominion four last February, had defeated Mark Pene (Whangamata) 27-12 in the morning to notch up win No 3.

But the game was completely dominated by the men from the river city. Belliss went to the tea break 14-3 up after 10 ends. The next five ends also went Belliss' way, making the score 24-3, at which point the white flag was waved.

Among the spectators for the game was former NZ coach John Murtagh, a contemporary of Belliss and Slight, and who put both Tasker and Brown through their paces in his famed School of Excellence at Paritutu in the early 1990s.

In the same section, first-time Open supervisor Paul Digby (Stratford-Avon), pictured, doesn't appear to be too distracted by those duties, or those as the umpire, as his side



recovered in the afternoon to notch its third win.

They beat Anton Ferrari (Central Levin) 20-19, having earlier lost 27-14 to Jim Corric (Riverhead).

It was a second loss for Ferrari, a regular qualifier in the Open, and with a scheduled match against Belliss this afternoon, the current Kapiti champion-of-champions pairs titleholder is in trouble.

But there was cheer for John Kearney (Hawera Park).

Receiving strong support from his wife, Ivy, Kearney got close to securing his second win of the tournament in the morning, but lost 25-20 to Ferrari. However, Kearney, playing third for Kearin Pollard — who appeared in his first Open in 1978 — got to properly celebrate his 70th birthday when the side cruised home 35-13 over Denis Rudman (West End) in the afternoon.



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Delany bows out after third successive loss

The hopes of a fifth Open title for Dan Delany (Royal Oak) concluded before they really started this year.

After two losses on Monday, the rest were required. But his side never got past the first obstacle — a team of juniors from Lepperton skipped by Dennis Turner.

Turner's side won the third round clash 26-25 on their home green to eliminate Delany.

Turner, Chris Ropitini, Jeremie Barr and Nathan Eriwata made it a day to remember when they scored win number two after lunch. There they pipped Joel Chard (Rahotu) 18-17 on an extra end.

Chard, one of Taranaki's most promising players, knows all about extra ends. Last April he combined with Camron Horo to win the Ta-

ranaki champion-of-champions pairs final on an extra end.

The extra end against Turner was his third in the last two days, with one going the way of the coastal men, and two against.

The dominant teams in the section are Dave Walker (Tahunanui) and Ray Scott (Kia Toa).

Walker's side looks the goods. They easily beat Wayne Te Huki (Okaihau) 27-11 and Garry Petersen (Wanganui East) 29-16. But the noteworthy aspect of the results is that both Te Huki and Petersen still have three wins.

Scott, playing with local substitute Wayne Hawkes, had to work harder to get both games yesterday — 27-19 over Wayne Field (Otaki Railway) and 27-26 against Colin Christie (Fitzroy).

Who has won how many after day two

Standings after the day two in the 120th Taranaki men's Open fours yesterday:

Section 1: four wins, Darren Goodin (Paritutu), Peter Small (Hutt); **three wins**, Murray Dickson (Pakuranga), Allan Sandercock (Sunshine Coast), Tupu Campbell (Opononi).

Section 2: four wins, Logan Amer (Johnsonville), Mark Mathews (Tui Park), Scott Roberts (Tower); **three wins**, Phil Todd (Johnsonville), Alex Reed (Ponsonby), Colin Williams (Riverhead).

Section 3: four wins, Neville Hill (Onehunga & Districts); **three wins**, Neil Earley (Inglewood), John Gray (Fitzroy), Neil Clarke (Frankton Junction).

Section 4: four wins, Billy Fulton (Henderson); **three wins**, John Garrud (West End), Allan Peers (Thames), Grant Anderson (Tower).

Section 5: four wins, nil; **three wins**, Gerard Slattery (Hinuera), Andy Ellis (Pringle Park), Paddy Deegan (Opunake), Andre Rautenbach (Pukekohe), Mike Oldfield (Tauranga South).

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

East).

Section 7: four wins, nil; **three wins**, Pat Walklin (Oakura), Dan Dickison (Tauranga), Steve Cottam (Paritutu), Trevor Johns (Paritutu), Daniel Geaney (Blockhouse Bay).

Section 8: four wins, Grant Wakefield (Johnsonville), Glen Riche (Blockhouse Bay); **three wins**, Graeme Crawford (Pohara), Grant Pease (Fitzroy), Dale McEldowney (Okato).

Section 9: four wins, nil; **three wins**, Michael Paton (Orewa), Ross Thorn (Naenae), Peter Dorreen (Far North RSA), Frankie Lim (Pukekohe).

Section 10: four wins, Joe Hunn (Kia Toa), Gavin Hamlyn (Martinborough); **three wins**, David Campbell (Rewa), Steve Critchlow (Naenae).

Section 11: four wins, Petar Sain (Carlton Cornwall), Paul Eaton (Mt Maunganui), John Petelo (Pt Chevalier); **three wins**, Alex Riddock (Paritutu), Mark Dudley (Hawera Park).

Section 12: four wins, Naki Nehemia (Johnsonville); **three wins**, Simon Poppleton (Takapuna), Craig De Faria (West End), Peter Rintoul (Island Bay).

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

Just two locals sides remain unbeaten

Only two Taranaki teams remain unbeaten now — Darren Goodin (Paritutu) and Scott Roberts (Tower).

Roberts, in the match of the morning, beat Alex Reed (Ponsonby) 27-20 and then accounted for Brian Pearce (Fitzroy) 28-3.

Reed returned to the winner's circle in round four, narrowly beating John Dunlop (Palmerston North) 19-18. He was joined on three wins by his fellow Bowls NZ employee, Colin Williams (Riverhead).

Williams scored a memorable 22-21 win in the morning round over the strong Phil Todd-skipped Johnsonville quartet. Todd, too, also finished with three wins.

The other three Taranaki teams that had won their opening three games all fell in the afternoon.

West End's John Garrud went down 22-20 to Phill Chisholm (Takapuna), the North Harbour side experiencing a change in fortunes with two wins on day two.

Pat Walklin (Oakura) was never in the hunt against Dan Dickison (Tauranga). Dickison won the match 31-8 and so is back on track to qualify with three wins.

And Grant Pease (Fitzroy) was nosed out 23-20 by Glen Richie (Blockhouse Bay). Trailing by two shots playing the last end, Pease held two, before Richie, who was in excellent touch, drew the shot to ensure the perfect record for his team of Tony Holdsworth, Jim Hunter and Doug McNamara. Holdsworth, who was runner-up in the Dominion singles in 1994, first appeared in the Open in 1978 as a member of Brian Elsmore's team.

Richie is one of four Auckland teams unbeaten. The others are John Petelo (Pt Chevalier), Petar Sain (Carlton Cornwall) and Billy Fulton (Henderson).

Sain, pictured, is playing third in the side, with Rob Ashton skipping. They won well twice yesterday, as did Petelo playing in the same section at West End. A third team in the group is also unbeaten. It is skipped by Paul Eaton (Mt Maunganui). Eaton and two of his teammates, Darryl Fale and Warren Harford,



are juniors, but they have experience at No 3 in the form of immaculate draw player, John Simons.

Wairarapa's hopes remain positive so far with Gavin Hamlyn (Martinborough) in good touch. He was originally scheduled to lead for Garry Muriwai this week.

But ill health forced Muriwai out. Hamlyn was promoted to skip, with Steven Willis off the front. Mark O'Brien and Bill Brunenberg complete the side that has hardly missed a beat, winning all four games comfortably. Yesterday they beat Rob Clark (Manaia) 24-15 and Colin Cherri (North End) 28-19.

In the same section, Joe Hunn (Havelock North) is also unbeaten. His side received a tough interrogation in the morning from a Tawa side skipped by Vassist Prasad. They got home there 27-24 and then were convincing 34-8 winners in the afternoon round over Steve Ramsay (Mt Albert).

It was Ramsay's second loss and must now win the rest.

And as for our Plimmerton friends. Yes, full responsibility is taken. After featuring in Tuesday's newsletter, both sides dropped both games yesterday. Sorry about that, fellas!

50 years ago: Murray Smith wins first Open

A Taumarunui side of Mark Antunovich, Dave Fleming, Harry Nicholas and Murray Smith, pictured left to right, completed the first half of their remarkable double when they won the 70th Open in 1975.

Smith's side edged past a Tauranga side of Joe Mullaney, Matt Bouzaid, Paddy Twigg — playing with an artificial leg — and Bill Powell 20-18 in the final played on the Monday morning at RSA.

While Smith's side was rated as an outsider, they proved their worth by claiming the title again in 1976.

Smith led 15-7 in the final, before the game tightened. A single on the 24th gave Smith a 19-18 lead playing the last. Powell held three. Nicholas reduced it to one before Smith moved the jack to take the shot and the title.

Teams skipped by Kevin Wing and Robbie Robson shared third place. Robson was left to rue dropping a six on the penultimate head to go down 25-20 to Powell.

The field of 490 teams included 240 from outside the province. One-hundred-and-two scored the necessary six wins to qualify. Among the visiting skips competing were past, present and future New Zealand representatives Norm Lash, Billy O'Neill, Ron Buch-



an — the trio with Gordon Jolly won the inaugural world fours in 1966 — Vic Sellars, Jack Somerville, Nick Unkovich and Robson.

In addition to Rodger Hassall, two other players taking part this year who will also involve 50 years ago are John Stockman and Maurice Symes. The duo are part of a Fitzroy four skipped by John Gray this year. Symes first played in the Open in 1973. This is his 14th and he skipped the winning team in 1989. Stockman played for nine successive years from 1971 — his 10th coming an amazing 46 years after his last.

The 1975 pairs title was won by Hawera's George Whareaitu, with his perfect delivery, and Bill Mitchell. They beat Paritutu's Horrie Johns and Ken Tompkins 24-11 in the decider.

Match of the morning — Thorn v O'Sullivan

Three of the 13 sections have no four winners — a fascinating fact. One such group is number nine, which today heads to Inglewood. Four teams are placed on three wins and a further seven on two wins. There will be plenty of action therefore over the coming four rounds, and that starts this morning when Ross Thorn (Naenae), with three wins, plays Danny O'Sullivan (Inglewood), who has two wins.

Thorn's side of Richard Corry, Peter Ballinger and Lou Newman, after three good wins, were undone 25-18 by Brendon Walton (Auckland), who through desperation, won twice yesterday to keep alive. O'Sullivan, playing with brothers Bernard and Gerry and Steve Sabine, suffered two narrow losses — 19-18 on an extra end to Derek McKee (Palmerston North) and 28-14 to Evan Jones (Fitzroy).



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Te Puna Umanga

