

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

Saturday, February 1, 2025

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Three Thames Valley sides into quarterfinals

In the first 72 editions of The Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours, no Thames Valley side has ever won the top prize.

Last season Kaye Bunn (Thames Coast) put in a bold showing, making it all the way to the final.

And while Bunn exited the this year's event in the opening round of post section yesterday, three other sides from her centre survived both games at Paritutu to book their places in the last eight today.

Lee McDonald's Mercury Bay side, comprising Colleen Section, Irene Goss and Nirie Reddy, made it through with a 27-19 win over Leanne Stewart (Hikurangi) in the afternoon.

Stewart had led the game 9-4 after eight, but then the tide turned. Reddy, not long out of juniors, impressed with some good conversions.

McDonald had beaten Lynda Francis (Havelock North) 26-15 in the first round.

Lynn Clifford, McDonald's clubmate in Whitianga, also made the top eight after tense 24-21 win over the last local hope, Gale Fache (Paritutu).

Clifford and McDonald have played together and combined to win the Thames Valley champion-of-champions fours as recently as two years ago.

But they brought their own teams to this tournament. Clifford is combining with Judy Campbell, Larisa King and Sue Rossiter, of umpiring fame.

They led Fache 10-4 early, but then after 16 ends, Fache had taken the initiative 19-13. After 20 ends, the scores were even. Clifford took a one-point lead into the last end. Campbell drew a beauty and there it remained.

Clifford had earlier upset Bunn in an all Thames Valley affair 21-18.

The third side from "Swamp Fox" country is skipped by Adele French (Thames Coast). French is originally from Taranaki and her

late uncle, Ollie, was well-known in horse racing circles and won the Taranaki New Year fours title in 2004.

Adele French is a highly competent competitor in her own right. She has won the last two New Zealand champion-of-champions triples with Bunn and Val Mathews. This week French is in charge, with the experienced and still highly proficient Mathews in the engine room at No 2. Waihi Beach juniors Bev Rogers and Kathryn McGaughey complete the side. The latter won the Thames Valley open singles in January.

They were comprehensive in the afternoon round, easily beating Robyn Wallace (Omarunui) 29-8, after leading 26-2. French edged clear only over the closing ends of her morning struggle with Paula Meredith (Johnsonville), winning 24-18.

This morning, French meets Pat Dixon (Naenae), Clifford plays Debbie Wildermoth (Wanganui East) and McDonald faces Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga). The fourth quarterfinal is between Janet Olliver (Waitarere Beach) and Sue Hodges (Omokoroa).

Dixon has Kathy Cross, Anne Robinson and Leonie Gough in her side and the ability of Gough to draw shots when needed was important in the final wash-up, as they ended the hopes of Cheryl Le Claire (Taradale) 25-17.

The Wellingtonians had looked comfortable leading 17-7 after 15 ends. But fast-forward four ends and the difference had been reduced to just two. The decider came on the 24th when Dixon took a five.



Constantine, a regular visitor, has a battle-hardened side with former NZ rep Mary Campbell, Carolyn Tasker and dual Dominion fours winner, Mina Paul.

They moved away from Pania Roberts (Opononi) after 10 ends, when the score was 9-8, to win 29-11.

Hodges had an exhausting day on the green but illustrated the resolution one would expect from the defending champions.

In the morning round, Hodges scored a three on the last end to sneak home 22-20 over Ruth Spittle (Taradale). After lunch they beat Dianne Strawbridge (Kensington) 27-21.

Hodges got away to a 17-6 lead, and while the gritty Northlander got within two points with six ends remaining, her side could not quite reel in Hodges and her side of Karen Pickering, Rachelle Morrison and Char Beckett.

In the remaining afternoon game, Debbie Wildermoth (Wanganui East) came from 19-16 down after 20 ends to beat Kath Nepe (Ngongotaha) 25-20. Wildermoth's team is

Thelma Ward, Adrienne Richdale and Joan Raymond. Raymond drew the jack superbly on the 24th end to set up a four-shot count.

Wildermoth used an extra end to beat Wendy Mitchell (Masterton) 31-30 in the morning. But her clubmate, Marlene Foster, was on the wrong side of a one-point match at the same time. Foster looked assured off victory, leading Nepe 24-5. But Nepe won the last 11 ends to take the game 25-24.

Janet Olliver and her Waitarere Beach side of Michelle McDonald, Mary Van der Velden and Gloria Michael earned the afternoon off with a bye, following her 24-20 win over Pam Mulford (Plimmerton). Olliver held the upper hand for most of the match. Her side led 23-14 through 20 ends, before Mulford closed to within three shots playing the last. Olliver took the point there to survive.

Meanwhile, 13 pairs secured the necessary three wins from four games in the Midlands Funds Management pairs event yesterday. Post section in the pairs is at Paritutu today.

Fours results and pairs draw for today

Results of post section play in The Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours at Paritutu yesterday:

Section 1, round 1: Sue Hodges (Omokoroa) 22 Ruth Spittle (Taradale) 20, Dianne Strawbridge (Kensington) 34 Jackie Morgan (Kia Toa) 8, Debbie Wildermoth (Wanganui East) 31 Wendy Mitchell (Masterton) 30, Kath Nepe (Ngongotaha) 25 Marlene Foster (Wanganui East) 24, Gale Fache (Paritutu) 22 Mary Korewha (Manurewa) 21, Lynn Clifford (Mercury Bay) 21 Kaye Bunn (Thames Coast) 18. **Round 2:** Janet Olliver (Waitarere Beach) 24 Pam Mulford (Plimmerton) 20, Hodges 27 Strawbridge 21, Wildermoth 25 Nepe 20, Clifford 24 Fache 21.

Section 2, round 1: Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga) 31 Trish Howard (West End) 7, Lee McDonald (Mercury Bay) 25 Lynda Francis (Havelock North) 15, Leanne Stewart (Hikurangi) 27 Sheryl Wellington (Mairangi Bay) 25, Pat Dixon (Naenae) 30 Vivienne Hall (West End) 15, Cheryl Le Claire (Taradale) 31

Robyn Wilkinson (Waikanae) 23, Robyn Wallace (Omarunui) 25 Adrienne Tilyard (Buckland) 21, Adele French (Thames Coast) 24 Paula Meredith (Johnsonville) 18. **Round 2:** Constantine 29 Pania Roberts (Opononi) 11, McDonald 27 Stewart 19, Dixon 25 Le Claire 17, French 29 Wallace 8.

Draw for post section play in the Midlands Funds Management women's Open fours-pairs event at Paritutu today, commencing at 8.45am:

Round 1: Yvonne Gibb (Miramar) v Di Smith (Havelock North), Mary Carpenter (Whakatane) v Martie Sisson (Whakatane), Allison Williamson (Taradale) v Rhonda Adams (Fitzroy), Louise Fitness (Havelock North) v Susan Cottam (West End), Rita Davey (Opunake) v Fay Jones (North End).

To report at 10.45, round 2: Jane Henderson (Opunake) v Cathy Andrews (Paritutu), Lyn Bowcock (Composite) who will play the Gibb/Smith winner.

Both finals will be at Paritutu, Sunday, at 9am.