

# Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

*Thursday, January 22, 2026*

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## Sun-blighted tournament will see more qualifiers

Participants in this year's Devon Hotel Taranaki men's Open fours must be worrying what they have done to encounter such a cruel run with the weather.

Day three saw only the third round completed, and in some instances, especially Urenui, that was heavy going. And at Paritutu, too, where two games were concluded indoors. Then the heavens opened.

With organisers still committed to giving all teams the full quota of 25 ends, it means that so far only three of the scheduled six rounds have been played.

If today's two rounds can be completed, it will mean the qualification criteria is three wins from the five games. But that, based off the forecast, is a big if. Even more scarily, the forecast for Friday and Saturday looks even worse. Between 90-100 qualifiers are expected. Even if five games are played this year that will be a record low for section play in the Open.

But as the majority of bowlers agree, you can't control the uncontrollable.

Of the 182 teams entered, 28 have posted the necessary three wins to qualify for post section. There are a further 62 teams on two wins, 65 sides have one win, while 27 quartets have yet to register a victory and are out of contention.

Naturally, a number of the more experienced players have already secured three wins, and generally, despite the conditions, most of the games went as expected yesterday.

Two of the more noted teams to lose, after a win and a loss on Monday, were those skipped by Maurice Symes (Fitzroy) and Logan Amer (Johnsonville). Both teams need to win twice today to qualify.

Symes's side was edged out 21-19 by qualifier David Ball (Carlton Cornwall) on a soaked Urenui green.

Amer's defeat was 20-15 against Graeme Crawford (Pohara). Crawford led 13-5 before Amer reduced the deficit to one point. But last year's semifinalists didn't manage to get in front.

In the delayed match of the morning, as promoted in Tuesday's *Open News*, Phil Morgan's Mt Maunganui team took the win 23-21 over Tower's Mark Anderson. Anderson had led 19-14 after 22 ends. But a drawn six to Morgan, followed by a three, gave Morgan's side a four-shot buffer playing the last end.

Joining Morgan among the qualifiers is Chris Waterson (St Johns), although his side got a fright from Dean File (Fitzroy). Waterson's side had look comfortable leading 17-9 after 15 ends. But six ends later File was in front 18-17. Three singles to Waterson turned the tide, and with File managing just a single on the last, Waterson took the game 20-19.

Rahotu's Nathan Goodin also had a few tense moments before his side got win No 3, 24-21, over Stacey Thomas (Paekakariki). Goodin held handy leads three times during the match and each time Thomas fought back. Just one point separated the teams after 24 heads. There was another exciting finish on an adjacent rink at Stratford-Avon where Ian Davis (Sunnybrae) got the nod 22-21 over Grant Wakefield (Johnsonville) after the scores had been even playing the last end. Both sides sit on two wins.

That is the same position as Peter Belliss (Aramoho), who accounted for Rangi Hiroti (Inglewood) 25-18. Hiroti led 8-0 early and still held a seven-shot lead mid-game, before a five gave Belliss the momentum.



## Who has won how many after day three

### Standings after the day three in the 121st Devon Hotel Taranaki men's Open fours yesterday:

**Section 1: three wins**, Phillip Morgan (Mount Manganui); **two wins**, Mark Anderson (Tower), Laurie Roycroft (Kihikihi), Kevin Sullivan (Stratford-Avon), Phillip Huwyler (Durie Hill), Ian Mahoney (Waitarere Beach), Mike Ponder (Eastbourne).

**Section two: three wins**, Scott Roberts (Tower), Mike O'Leary (Aramoho), Andrew Bowden (Parklands); **two wins**, Richard Helms (New Plymouth), John Michael (Waitarere Beach), Leighton Wilding (Silverstream), Dave Jones (Taupo).

**Section 3: three wins**, Nathan Goodin (Rahotu); **two wins**, Grant Wakefield (Johnsonville), Ian Davis (Sunnybrae), Daniel Geaney (Blockhouse Bay), Rex Dyason (Stratford-Avon), Frankie Lim (Pukekohe), Keith Wood (Riverhead).

**Section 4: three wins**, Paul Eaton (Mount Manganui); **two wins**, Shae Fleming (Rahotu), Craig De Faria (West End), Bruce Peacock (Okato), Peter Per-shouse (Calliope Central), Peter Small (Naenae), Trevor Ross (Johnsonville), Adam Batty (Levin), Mark Dudley (Hawera Park).

**Section 5, three wins**, Joe Hunn (Kia Toa); **two wins**, Steve Muller (Oakura), Regan Larkin (Fairfield), Barrie Johnstone (Katikati), Peter Belliss (Aramoho), William Rona (Waitara), Brendon Gibson (Johnsonville).

**Section 6: three wins**, Dean McMurchy (Kamo), Dean Edge (St Heliers), Andy Ellis (Te Atatu Peninsula); **two wins**, Graeme Gunn (Whangamata), Brent Stubbins (Naenae).

**Section 7: three wins**, David Ball (Carlton

Cornwall), Jono Radka (Papanui); **two wins**, Michael Proffit (Kihikihi), Bill Fulton (Henderson), Paul Digby (Stratford-Avon), Wayne Parker (Bay View).

**Section 8: three wins**, Paddy Deegan (Opunake), Nigel Berry (Hawera Park), Graeme Crawford (Pohara); **two wins**, Lozza Gall (Boyne Tannum), Dan Delany (Royal Oak), Deryck Scott (Omokoroa), Tony Gray (Frankton Junction), Pat Walklin (Raglan).

**Section 9: three wins**, Petar Sain (Carlton Cornwall), Garry Muriwai (Martinborough), Tony James (Mairangi Bay), John Garrud (West End); **two wins**, Jim Cornish (Omarunui), Ted Walker (Carlton Cornwall).

**Section 10: three wins**, Steve Fisher (Royal Oak), Warwick Fredrickson (Feilding — pictured); **two wins**, Brian Pearce (Stratford-Avon), Michael Crooke (Raumati), Dennis Turner (Lepperton), Cary Pinker (Wanganui East), Murray Dickson (Pakuranga).

**Section 11: three wins**, Bernard Anderson (Wanganui); **two wins**, Darren Goodin (Paritutu), Geoff Bovey (Paekakariki), Keith Hastings (Miramar), Ian Busby (Tower), Wayne Gunder-

sen (Rewa), David Brunton (Stratford-Avon), Trevor Belk (Takaro).

**Section 12: three wins**, Barry Fishburn (Picton), Phil Corney (Durie Hill), Adam Blucher (Te Atatu Peninsula); **two wins**, Danny O'Sullivan (Inglewood), Steve Boyce (Whangamata), Kevin Smith (Hinuera), David Archer (Paritutu).

**Section 13: three wins**, Kevin Smith (Burnside), Bart Robertson (New Plymouth), Chris Waterson (St Johns); **two wins**, Henry Yee (Whitby), Mark Taylor (Matua), Wayne Hawkes (West End).



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## Bowls purist enjoying time back in the Taranaki Open

Part of the romance of The Devon Hotel Taranaki men's Open fours is the number of experienced, traditional players.

The sort of folk who in tennis appreciate Wimbledon or in cricket yearn for tests.

There are a number who fall into that category this year and one such person is Kevin Smith, who is skipping a Burnside (Christchurch) team. It is his third Taranaki Open.

"We are having a great time," Smith said, soon after learning the morning-round win earned by his team had secured a place in post section. "We are loving the networking and camaraderie."

The team are appreciating the format and even the diabolical weather wasn't reducing their enthusiasm, Smith said.

Smith is in his 53rd year in the sport and his side contains two players in their 48th seasons, Graeme Rees and Pat Bonham, and a second-year bowler, Scott McAulay.

"We're introducing him (Scott) to the history of the game and the wider community. The competition is huge, the play is strong and so is the sense of sportsmanship."

Smith ought to know.

These days he is employed part-time by Bowls New Zealand, primarily looking after Para bowls, and he is a well-travelled and seasoned competitor.

It all commenced at the once-great Linwood club in Christchurch, following in the footsteps of his late brother Bryan, who won the Dominion fours in 1978 playing for Morgan Moffat.

Smith moved around the country, spending time in Whakatane (playing under the wise counsel of Peter Clark), Dunedin and Browns Bay. But he has always headed back to Christchurch.

He once represented Thailand at the Pacific Championships in 1995 and has accumulated 11 centre titles around the country, including six in Dunedin.

Smith said that the 25 end games are still the ultimate in fours. "Games are won and lost on



those last seven ends."

After two wins on Monday, Smith's team made it three-in-a-row with a 23-13 effort over Brian Osmond (Frankton Junction) yesterday, breaking free over the closing ends. Smith is one of three Dunedin Gold Star holders competing this week, with Regan Larkin (Fairfield) and Steve Fleming (Forbury Park) both sitting on two wins.

Larkin, in his second Open, and his side of Aaron Tribe, BJ Carroll and Rueben Silva, suffered their first defeat yesterday. They lost 26-17 to former first-class rugby referee Garry Murfitt (West End).

Fleming is playing this week in a Wellington side skipped by regular visitor Keith Hastings (Miramar). It contains the well-performed Ian McLeod and Fleming's son, Patrick, who lives in the Capital.

After a loss on Monday morning, the team edged David Brunton (Stratford-Avon) 28-27 yesterday.

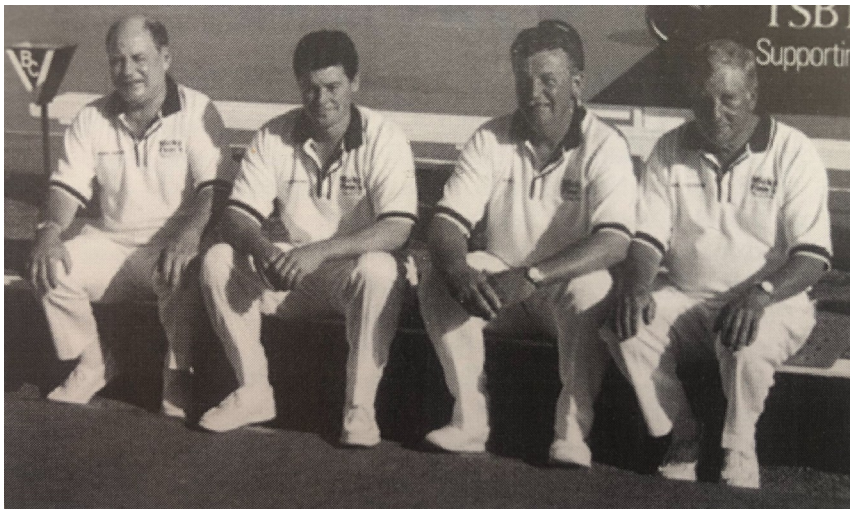
Overall, south island sides are experiencing a successful week so far. Of the nine teams entered, five have already qualified. In addition to Smith, Papanui's Jono Radka, Parklands' Andrew Bowden, Picton's Barry Fishburn and Pohara's Graeme Crawford are also assured of making it through.

Fishburn's side, includes Joe Peel, who is endeavouring to repeat the efforts of his father, John, the 1948 winner. Playing on his old home green, Inglewood, yesterday, Peel got the win 27-23 over the previously unbeaten Kevin Smith (Hinuera).



## 25 years ago: Title goes to SI for only second time

Only on two occasions in the history of the Taranaki Open has the title been won by a team from the South Island: Colin Grieve (Motueka) in 1958 and Noel Alexander (Rangiora) in 2001. Alexander's side of the late Roger Norton (a known and experienced competitor at that time), rising star Darren Redway and Rick Day emerged as the winners from a field of 276 teams. There were 125 visitors, the same as this year, and 151 locals, 94 more than this year.



Day's brother-in-law, Phil Quinney, the local radio announcer, had encouraged the side to travel north and then added the moniker of the "Rangiora Rat Pack" to the side.

After 89 of the quartets secured the necessary five wins from seven – Tuesday afternoon was a wash-out – Alexander's side started to attract the attention of the public when his side eliminated the then double-current Dominion fours titleholder, Sid Giddy on Saturday.

Vogeltown hosted the final on its B green, complete with a large temporary stand that extended over most of what was then known as the winter green at that club. The previous

final Vogeltown had hosted was in 1971. A large audience watched the final on the Monday, including on Taranaki TV, where the late David Hilton Bennett provided the commentary.

In a close final, after the scores had been level at 18-all three ends from home, Alexander's side took those closing heads to win 24-18 over Paritutu's Vic Robson, Terry Muir, Bryan Sanger and Rodger Hassall.

Island Bay's Vince Basile and Donineco Masasa overturned a 13-3 deficit to deny Chris Jagusch and Peter Batchelor (Henderson) 21-18 in the pairs final.

## Roberts sounds warning with winning run

Tower's Scott Roberts and his side secured their spot in the knockout rounds with a 26-12 win over Peter Dorreen (Far North RSA), the holder of 50 centre titles, yesterday morning.

Roberts' side is hunting for a third-successive semifinals berth and they certainly rate a chance, with Mark Kuklinski and Kelly Hill up front, and the experienced John Roberts at No 3.

John Roberts has been one of the most consistent draw players in the province over the past 30 years, as illustrated by his 28 Taranaki titles, which has him in third place on the all-time list.

Roberts will achieve another milestone tomorrow, when he reaches his 65th birthday. While his teammates won't be expecting a shout for every shot he draws on the day — now, that would be expensive — they shouldn't need their wallets!



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