

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

Friday, January 23, 2026

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Change in conditions of play to ensure completion

Three games of 18 ends will be played in The Devon Hotel Taranaki men's Open fours when post section commences this morning.

That will come as a disappointment to some players, who thrive on the 25 end games. But after weighing up all factors, including the unpromising weather forecast, organisers have resolved that the highest priority is bringing the Open to a successful conclusion.

"There is a huge risk, given the weather, that we may not be able to complete the event if we stick with 25 ends and encounter more wet weather," Bowls Taranaki Executive Officer Ian Lewis said.

While the demand from players to stick with 25 ends is high, this would result in a Monday morning final even if no more time is lost. The last Open final held on a Monday was in 2010. Broadcasting arrangements and various team and individual travel plans have also been made, which a Sunday final would satisfy.

If three rounds are completed today at all six greens being used for post section, that will leave 12 teams remaining to play over the weekend. This being the case, 25 end games will resume. The Paritutu Indoor Complex would also be capable of accommodating the necessary matches should the need arise. Otherwise, the finals this year will be held at West End.

There was some relief at lunchtime yesterday at headquarters when the number of sides that had or could qualify, fell below the 128 mark. That meant that an eighth post section round would not be required.

The two sections playing at Stratford-Avon and Inglewood today having drawn byes but will still play three rounds.

The afternoon round yesterday enjoyed arguably the best weather of the week so far and ultimately 94 sides secured the necessary three wins from the qualifying games to advance to post section today.

The biggest casualty was Logan Amer (Johnsonville), a semifinalist in 2025. His side fell 25-16 to a former Johnsonville member, Pat Walklin, who is skipping a Raglan side this week. The victory was the third for Walklin.

However, the Johnsonville club will still be represented in post section after three of the five sides from the club made it through.

After a second loss in the morning, Grant Wakefield's side sailed through 30-19 after lunch; it was the same scenario for both Trevor Ross and Brendon Gibson, their sides prevailing 30-11 and 32-11 respectively.

And another former Johnsonville man, Maurice Symes (Fitzroy), also advanced, after two close matches against local sides.

Despite the reduction in the number of games, there was still frustration and delight as qualification was missed or achieved.

Himatangi Beach junior, Jay Taylor, the nephew of Blake Signal, drove the jack into the ditch on an extra end to win a round five clash 23-22 over Brent Stubbins (Naenae), who had already qualified. It completed a great transformation for Taylor's team. They had lost their two games on Monday but won the next three to advance.

Other teams that were also in that category were Liam Hill (Onehunga & Districts), Evan Jones (Fitzroy) and John Petelo (Birkenhead).

There were five teams that won all five and therefore denied their opponents in the last round. Those sides were Nathan Goodin (Rahotu), Dean McMurchy (Kamo), Paddy Deegan (Opunake), Nigel Berry (Hawera Park) and John Garrud (West End).

Bowls New Zealand President Piripi Huwyler also qualified. His Para team beat Eric Ashby (Plimmerton) 26-14 in a match both sides needed to win.



Only one Australian side makes it through

Tumut's Peter Hawken is the only Australian side to qualify. But it could have easily been five.

Hawken's side worked hard to secure the elusive third win yesterday afternoon when they held off four-winner Phil Morgan (Mt Maungau) 22-20. They had trailed 18-17 after 21 ends, before a two, a single and a two, gave them a buffer playing the last.

The other four Australian sides all lost in the last round to miss out.

Roger Manning (Maroochy) was edged 21-20 by Paul Digby (Stratford-Avon), after both sides entered the round on two wins. Digby led 9-0 before Manning replied to lead 15-9 and then 20-15 after 21 ends. Digby scored on the remaining ends, including a two on the last end, to qualify.

It was the same for the other three sides, which were all left on two wins: Peter Pershouse, Lozza Gall and Bretty Bayly. The latter two both missed out by a measly two shots.

Fours post section and pairs section play for Friday

Post section draw for the 121st Taranaki men's Open fours on January 23 (9am start):

Section 1 – Inglewood: William Rona (Waitara), Adam Blucher (Te Atatu Peninsula), Tony James (Mairangi Bay), Bernard Anderson (Wanganui), Dennis Turner (Lepperton), Phil Corney (Durie Hill), Barry Fishburn (Picton), Kevin Smith (Burnside), Steve Fisher (Royal Oak), John Petelo (Birkenhead), Peter Belliss (Aramoho), Mike Ponder (Eastbourne), Dave Jones (Taupo), Paul Digby (Stratford-Avon), Roger Neilson (Wanganui East), Danny O'Sullivan (Inglewood).

Section 2 – Stratford-Avon: Wayne Gundersen (Rewa), Stacey Thomas (Paekakariki), Wayne Hawkes (West End), Carl Northcott (Miramar), Adam Batty (Levin), Andy Ellis (Te Atatu Peninsula), Tony Gray (Frankton Junction), Brian Cable (North End), Cary Pinker (Wanganui East), Mark Dudley (Hawera Park), Steve Muller (Oakura), Deryck Scott (Omokoroa), John Garrud (West End), Bill Fulton (Henderson), Phillip Morgan (Mount Manganui), David Ball (Carlton Cornwall).

Section 3 – Paritutu B, report 11.30am: Kevin Smith (Hinuera), Liam Hill (Onehunga Districts); **9am start:** Neil Earley (Inglewood), Phillip Huwylar (Durie Hill), Andrew Bowden (Parklands), Brendon Gibson (Johnsonville), Bruce Peacock (Okato), Richard Helms (New Plymouth), Ted Walker (Carlton Cornwall), Steve Boyce (Whangamata), Nathan Goodin (Rahotu), Nigel Berry (Hawera Park), Peter Hawken (Tumut), Darren Goodin (Paritutu).

Section 4 – Paritutu A: Gavin Taylor (Himatangi Beach), Graeme Crawford (Pohara), Evan Jones (Fitzroy), Brian Pearce (Stratford-Avon), Brent Stubbins (Naenae), Ian Busby (Tower), David Hewitt (Upper Hutt), Scott Roberts (Tower), Craig De Faria (West End), Frankie Lim (Pukekohe), Barrie Johnstone (Katikati), Daniel Geaney (Blockhouse Bay), Joe Hunn (Kia Toa), Keith Has-

tings (Miramar), Petar Sain (Carlton Cornwall), Regan Larkin (Fairfield).

Section 5 – West End 2: David Brunton (Stratford-Avon), Mark Anderson (Tower), Dean Edge (St Heliers), Trevor Ross (Johnsonville), Michael Crooke (Raumati), Mark Taylor (Matua), Warwick Fredrickson (Feilding), Shae Fleming (Rahotu), Keith Sargent (Fitzroy), Garry Muriwai (Martinborough), John Michael (Waitarere Beach), Dean McMurchy (Kamo), Michael Proffit (Kihikihi), Jim Cornish (Omarunui), Chris Waterson (St Johns), Maurice Symes (Fitzroy).

Section 6 – West End 3: Dan Delany (Royal Oak), Paddy Deegan (Opunake), Grant Wakefield (Johnsonville), Bart Robertson (New Plymouth), Ian Mahoney (Waitarere Beach), Jono Radka (Papanui), Peter Small (Naenae), Pat Walklin (Raglan), Henry Yee (Whitby), Mike O'Leary (Aramoho), Mike Oldfield (Mount Manganui), Leighton Wilding (Silverstream), Paul Eaton (Mount Manganui), Trevor Belk (Takaro), Geoff Bovey (Paekakariki), Keith Wood (Riverhead).

Marbles Open fours-pairs section play draw (8.45am start) today:

Section one at West End 1: M Baldwin, K Stevenson, R Farrant, B Bayly, C Gardner, K McGovern, G James, M McArthur, T Campbell, M Kenny, N Morgan, H Andrews, R Knight, J Kishore.

Section two at Oakura: W Place, R Clark, J Campbell, I Davis, B Martelletti, I Little, J Peters, R Brokate, C McLellan, T McGrath, P Pershouse, R Manning, J Dicks, D Read.

Section three at New Plymouth 1: C Blair, D File, P Hassall, F Christian, C Gyde, T Morris, B Currie, M Dempsey, G McLeod, C Hall, S Cottam, F Nicholas, L Gall, S Siffleet.

Section four at New Plymouth 2: W Te Huki, D McLeod, G Evans, H Baloch, M Bayliss, I Morris, T Johns, M Nalder, W Donovan, B Hall, K Hall, T Howell, P Megaw.