

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

Saturday, January 24, 2026

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Title race wide open as field is reduced to 12

Seven visitors and five Taranaki sides will resolve the 121st Devon Hotel Taranaki men's Open fours title. And the field has a wide-open field to it.

The three games of 18 ends yesterday certainly tripped up a few, the agony of a narrow defeat and the "what-might-have-beens" had it been 25 ends. While everyone was aware of the changes to the conditions of play, the most noted feature was the number of games where the plug was pulled early, including one match after just 10 ends.

Four of the surviving 12 sides are already through to the quarterfinals and they will play those clashes this morning at West End: Adam Blucher (Te Atatu Peninsula) meets Peter Belliss (Aramoho) and Andy Ellis (Te Atatu Peninsula) will play Cary Pinker (Wanganui East). Those two winners will earn the afternoon off and play the semifinals on Sunday.

The other eight teams still in contention will need to win twice today to make the money rounds. In matches this morning, Liam Hill (Onehunga & Districts) meets Nathan Goodin (Rahotu), Evan Jones (Fitzroy) plays Frankie Lim (Pukekohe), Mark Anderson (Tower) squares off with Maurice Symes (Fitzroy) and Bart Robertson (New Plymouth) will tangle with Paul Eaton (Mt Maunganui).

All the successful sides won thrice on the day, except for 16-year-old Hill, who had a bye first thing. They all had their own recipes and respective delights in advancing.

Robertson and Symes, both vastly experienced players, had to call on their composure throughout the day to get through.

Symes has always thrived on post section play and his side is warming nicely after their 19-8 third-round effort against Dean McMurchy (Kamo). Symes led 10-8 after 12 ends and won the next four heads to sew up the contest. McMurchy, in the previous round, had scored 15 points in succession between the eighth

and 14th ends in beating one of the teams some were picking to win the title, Garry Muriwai (Martinborough), 21-12.

Symes had earlier beaten Jim Cornish (Omarunui) 20-14 in round two, after leading by two shots playing the last, and Chris Waterson (St Johns) 20-14 in the morning, after the scores had been tied after 16 ends.

Robertson oozed class most of the day, with his side winning 21-11 over Pat Walklin (Raglan) in the last round. Robertson coolly drew second shot on the final end of the middle game to allow his side to sneak past Paddy Deegan (Opunake) 15-14.

There were plenty of other nailbiters, too.

Nathan Goodin (Rahotu) dropped a three on the last end of his third-round clash against Ted Walker (Carlton Cornwall). That forced the game to an extra end, where Goodin's No 3, Joel Chard, rose to the occasion, drawing off the shot bowl to give Rahotu a 19-18 win in front of a vocal Coastal gallery.

Belliss, after two big wins, also needed a 19th head to prevail 15-14 over cross-city rival, Roger Neilson (Wanganui East). And it required a bit of Belliss magic with his last bowl, when he came through a narrow gap to dislodge the shot bowl. It was described as a bowl for all seasons, one that will live in the memory banks, and the Inglewood crowd showed their appreciation.

Belliss' clash with Blucher promises much, after the latter ended the hopes of Barry Fishburn (Picton) 22-18. Fishburn led 15-14 after 12 ends and held a few on the head when the rains came. The green was partly submerged, play was halted and the end declared dead. On the replay, Blucher took a three and repeated it on the next to take a match-winning break.

Pinker also went to the death in his final match of the day, taking a brace on the last head to pip West End's John Garrud 22-21.

After the successful completion of three rounds yesterday, normality is restored forthwith in the Open. All the remaining games will be of 25 ends and will be held at West End. Should the weather turn sour — and there is a strong chance of this at the time of going to print — then play will be transferred to Paritu-

tu's Indoor Complex.

Meanwhile, 20 combinations won the necessary three games from four to qualify in the Marbles Restaurant pairs event. Those teams will also play at West End today, with the field being reduced down over three 21-end games to the semifinalists.

Results from day 5

Results of post section play in the 121st Devon Hotel Taranaki Open fours yesterday:

Section 1 – Inglewood, round 2: A Blucher (Te Atatu Peninsula) 27 W Rona (Waitara) 7, T James (Mairangi Bay) 16 B Anderson (Wanganui) 13, P Corney (Durie Hill) 20 D Turner (Lepperton) 14, B Fishburn (Picton) 17 K Smith (Burnside) 7, S Fisher (Royal Oak) 19 J Petelo (Birkenhead) 15, P Belliss (Aramoho) 29 M Ponder (Eastbourne) 2, D Jones (Taupo) 17 P Digby (Stratford-Avon) 7, R Neilson (Wanganui East) 23 D O'Sullivan (Inglewood) 11.

Round 3: Blucher 20 James 7, Fairburn 20 Corney 16, Belliss 19 Fisher 6, Neilson 19 Jones 15. **Round 4:** Blucher 22 Fairburn 18, Belliss 15 Neilson 14.

Section 2 – Stratford-Avon, round 2: S Thomas (Paekakariki) 20 W Gundersen (Rewa) 13, W Hawkes (West End) 25 C Northcott (Miramar) 6, A Ellis (Te Atatu Peninsula) 20 A Batty (Levin) 5, T Gray (Frankton Junction) 18 B Cable (North End) 9, C Pinker (Wanganui East) 20 M Dudley (Hawera Park) 14, D Scott (Omokoroa) 20 S Muller (Oakura) 10, J Garrud (West End) 20 B Fulton (Henderson) 15, P Morgan (Mount Manganui) 19 D Ball (Carlton Cornwall) 11. **Round 3:** Hawkes 15 Thomas 11, Ellis 17 Gray 14, Pinker 22 Scott 9, Garrud 19 Morgan 15. **Round 4:** Ellis 21 Hawkes 18, Pinker 22 Garrud 21.

Section 3 – Paritutu B, round 1: N Earley (Inglewood) 21 P Huwyler (Durie Hill) 18, B Gibson (Johnsonville) 21 A Bowden (Parklands) 11, R Helms (New Plymouth) 26 B Peacock (Okato) 11, T Walker (Carlton Cornwall) 14 S Boyce (Whangamata) 13, N Goodin (Rahotu) 21 N Berry (Hawera Park) 13, P Hawken (Tumut) 15 Darren Goodin (Paritutu) 14. **Round 2:** L Hill (Onehunga Districts) 23 K Smith (Hinuera) 4, Gibson 15 Earley 9, Walker 16 Helms 10, Goodin 18 Hawken 7. **Round 3:** Hill 21 Gibson 12, Goodin 19 Walker 18.

Section 4 – Paritutu A, round 1: G Crawford (Pohara) 16 G Taylor (Himatangi Beach) 15, E Jones (Fitzroy) 20 B Pearce (Stratford-Avon) 11, B Stubbins (Naenae) 22 I Busby (Tower) 10, S Roberts (Tower) 20 D Hewitt (Upper Hutt) 11, F Lim (Pukekohe) 22 C De Faria (West End) 14, D Geaney (Blockhouse Bay) 25 B Johnstone (Katikati) 9, J Hunn (Kia Toa) 16 K Hastings (Miramar) 11, P Sain

(Carlton Cornwall) 21 R Larkin (Fairfield) 19. **Round 2:** Jones 20 Crawford 8, Stubbins 20 Roberts 15, Lim 19 Geaney 6, Sain 24 Hunn 6. **Round 3:** Jones 21 Stubbins 12, Lim 17 Sain 13.

Section 5 – West End 2, round 1: M Anderson (Tower) 24 D Brunton (Stratford-Avon) 12, T Ross (Johnsonville) 19 D Edge (St Heliers) 8, M Taylor (Matua) 25 M Crooke (Raumati) 17, W Fredrickson (Feilding) 24 S Fleming (Rahotu) 8, G Muriwai (Martinborough) 17 K Sargent (Fitzroy) 16, D McMurchy (Kamo) 21 J Michael (Waitarere Beach) 11, J Cornish (Omarunui) 29 M Proffit (Kihikihi) 6, M Symes (Fitzroy) 20 C Waterson (St Johns) 14.

Round 2: Anderson 23 Ross 6, Fredrickson 25 Taylor 6, McMurchy 21 Muriwai 12, Symes 20 Cornish 14. **Round 3:** Anderson 23 Fredrickson 7, Symes 19 McMurchy 8.

Section 6 – West End 3, round 1: P Deegan (Opunake) 21 Dan Delany (Royal Oak) 3, B Robertson (New Plymouth) 18 G Wakefield (Johnsonville) 10, J Radka (Papanui) 20 I Mahoney (Waitarere Beach) 5, P Walklin (Raglan) 23 P Small (Naenae) 12, M O'Leary (Aramoho) 18 H Yee (Whitby) 15, L Wilding (Silverstream) 24 M Oldfield (Mt Manganui) 14, P Eaton (Mt Manganui) 16 T Belk (Takaro) 13, G Bovey (Paekakariki) 19 K Wood (Riverhead) 9. **Round 2:** Robertson 15 Deegan 14, Walklin 19 Radka 18, O'Leary 16 Wilding 14, Eaton 13 Bovey 12. **Round 3:** Robertson 21 Walklin 11, Eaton 14 O'Leary 10.

Draw for post section play in the Marbles Restaurant at West End this, all matches commencing at 8.45am, round 1 (green 2): Colin Gardner (Waitarere Beach) v Roger Manning (Maroochy – QLD), Jim Kishore (Kaikohe) v Max Nalder (Motueka), Tony McGrath (Calliope – QLD) v Daryl Read (Composite), Jason Peters (Manaia) v Gavin McLeod (Tawa). **Round 2 (green 2):** Colin McLellan (Paritutu) v Paul Hassall (Tawa), Marshall Kenny (Silverstream) v Gareth Evans (Johnsonville). **Round 2 (green 1):** Steve Cottam (Paritutu) v Joe Rona (Waitara), Tupu Campbell (Opononi) v Ted Morris (Glendowie), Bruce Hall (Composite) v Crawford Blair (Glendowie), Nicky Morgan (Paekakariki) v Murray Bayliss (Johnsonville).