

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

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Twenty-eight sides unbeaten after opening day

Twenty-eight sides will have an extra spring Ruth Spittle (Taradale) emerged as the only in their step this morning after they navigated two-winner from the Hawke's Bay stable of 10 through the first day's play without defeat in sides — but that included some anxious moments, especially in the morning round, with the 74th Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours yesterday.

After the two wins, those teams are halfway to had led 13-5 after nine ends, before Spittle re-qualifying, with four further rounds being turned the favour to lead 22-16 after 19. But played today and tomorrow. There were 26 teams that had one win and one loss, while the 23-22 with two to play, before Spittle, with a remaining 28 sides lost both games.

Inevitably most of the favoured sides won comfortable victors in the afternoon. both.

Defending champion Marilyn Constantine, who has Ruth Lynch in her Tauranga side, was untroubled in both games. Lynch's daughter, Rachelle Morrison (Omokoroa), despite still being a junior, was impressive on the green and the scoreboard, as her side notched up two big wins as well.

But there were exceptions, with three of the most experienced skips in the Open all losing twice — Gayle Melrose (Tauranga), Anne Lomas (Far North RSA) and Karen de Jongh (Hinuera). However, they do not need to look too deep into the history books for inspiration.

Liam Hill, runner-up in the men's Open on Sunday, also lost both matches on day one before commencing his winning run. Fletcher's side did initially wonder what they had got themselves in for, failing to score on the first eight ends in the morning against four

Lomas possesses one of the best attitudes in the sport and following yesterday's two defeats, still held herself with the poise of a double world champion. Her side lost 26-15 to Jackie Morgan (Kia Toa) and 21-20 to Vivienne Hall (West End). Lomas had led 19-7. There was joy for Bowls Taranaki Patron, Patty Symes. Playing No 2 in a Tower side skipped by her daughter, Irene Taunt, the team recorded two handsome wins — 32-16 over 2020 champion Hetty Bolscher (Pukekohe) and 39-10 against Gail Burrows (Inglewood), which included an eight on one end..

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Wendy Green (Ngongotaha), who was runner-up in the Bay of Plenty fours last weekend, was another of the favoured teams to end with two wins. The morning game was secured 24-21 against Maree Gadsby (Fitzroy). Gadsby had led 17-10 after 16 ends. But Green dominated the match after that and led by two shots playing the last head.

Gadsby did at least salvage something from the day, coming from behind to beat Bridget Fletcher (Paritutu) 25-24 in round two. There were noteworthy performances from two local teams skipped by Taranaki representatives, Rhonda Adams (Fitzroy) and Trish Howard (West End), both winning twice with relative comfort, even though the former was chased hard at the end by Denise Cottam (West End) in the afternoon.

Pam Mulford (Plimmerton) was one of the unlucky teams, dropping both games. The Wellington rep lost 21-20 on an extra end to Cindy Nicoll (Inglewood) in the morning, after an outstanding 25th end saw Nicoll score the two points required to put the game into overtime.

Mulford was then nosed out 27-24 by Lynn Clifford (Mercury Bay). Clifford had produced some excellent deliveries during her morning 21-18 hard-fought win over Fay Bird (Central Cambridge).

Marlene Foster (Wanganui East) returned the best net-differential of the day of plus-58 after two big wins. But another prominent team from the river city, Dianne Patterson (Gonville -Castlecliff), never got going and lost both.

In section six, which gave great comments of the Oakura green, Anne Mahon (Katikati) upset Paritutu's Heather Johns 23-19 in an even afternoon encounter. Mahon won twice, as did Kathy Dempster-Rivett (Whakatane) and the looming Diane Strawbridge (Kensington).

One of the less known names in Taranaki to also win twice with some class was Marlene Alberino-Kay (Island Bay). Alberino-Kay is a competitive player with three Wellington crowns, plus a couple of over-60s titles.

* For those wishing to purchase shirts, go to: <https://www.gamechanger.org.nz/product-page/taranaki-bowls-ladies-polo-shirt>

Summary after first day's play

Standings after day one in The Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours yesterday: **Section 1:** two wins, Lee McDonald (Mercury Bay), Ruth Spittle (Taradale), Irene Taunt (Bluff Hill), Kristin Stampa (Stratford-Avon). (Tower); one win, Tina Jakes (Tokoroa), Chris Commane (Opunake), Hetty Bolscher (Plymouth), Tracy Fickling (Allenton), Paria (Pukekohe), Sharon Siegruhn (Northend), Viv Hall (West End), Jackie Morgan (Kia Toa). **Section 2:** two wins, Ange Debique (Stratford-Avon), Wendy Green (Ngongotaha), Tia Moka (Stratford-Avon); one win, Rachelle Morrison (Omokoroa); one win, Maree Gadsby (Fitzroy), Sandy Booth (Whakatane), Janet Olliver (Waitarere Beach), Bridget Fletcher (Paritutu).

Section 3: two wins, Rhonda Adams (Fitzroy), Estelle Hickey (Carlton Cornwall), Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga), Linda Kape (Okato); one win, Judy Cato (Te Awamutu), Pat Dixon (Naenae), Tereska Knap (Miramar), Denise Cottam (West End).

Section 4: two wins, Barbara Harvey (Paritutu), Robyn Fisher (Royal Oak), Adele Drews (Paritutu). **Section 5:** two wins, Elaine Hodge (New Plymouth), Wendy Sarjeant (Mangawhai), Els Maas (Lumsden); one win, Val Symes (New Plymouth), Diane Strawbridge (Kensington), Anne Mahon (Katikati); one win, Ngaire McKinley (Omarunui), Heather Johns (Paritutu), Janelle Dunce (Lepperton), Janice Ropitini (West End).

Section 6: two wins, Kathy Dempster-Rivett (Whakatane), Diane Strawbridge (Kensington), Anne Mahon (Katikati); one win, Marlene Alberino-Kay (Island Bay); one win, Barbara Hewitt (Taradale), Mihi Hona (Stratford-Avon). **Section 7:** two wins, Marlene Foster (Wanganui East), Cindy Nicoll (Inglewood), Lynn Clifford (Mercury Bay), Sheryl Wellington (Mairangi Bay), Hazel Littlejohn (Darfield); one win, Chris Telford (Napier), Cathy Andrews (Paritutu).