

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

Thursday, January 29, 2026

www.taranakibowls.co.nz www.facebook.com/taranakibowls/

Littlejohn returns and performs with four wins

Hazel Littlejohn is back with a vengeance. The Darfield stalwart missed the 2025 Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours and has made up for it this time by skipping her side to four-successive wins during the first two days of the 2026 competition.

Littlejohn's side of Liz Hamilton, Annie Simpson and Diane Currie — who bettered the efforts of her husband, Bruce, in last week's men's Open — scored two fine wins on the Paritutu back green yesterday to be among the 11 early qualifiers.

The Canterbury crew beat Marlene Foster (Wanganui East) 26-13 and Lynn Clifford (Mercury Bay) 29-19.

Against Foster, Littlejohn raced ahead 16-1 after eight ends. The closest Foster got was 20-12 behind after 16, before Littlejohn, pictured, moved away again.

The afternoon

score against Clifford was inflated late in the match. A brace of fours mid-game took Littlejohn from 11-8 down to 19-12 in front.

But the Thames Valley quartet rallied, closing to 21-19 behind with three to play. Littlejohn, though, settled the issue with counts of 3-1-4.

Littlejohn is the current President of Deaf Lawn Bowls New Zealand. She competed at the 2023 world deaf championships in Scotland, winning gold in the singles and silver in the pairs.

Illustrating the quality of the performance of her side so far this week, three of their oppo-

nents so far have recorded three wins — Chris Telford (Napier), Foster and Clifford — while the other five sides on the same side of the draw in section seven as Littlejohn are already to four-successive wins during the first two days of the 2026 competition.

Littlejohn's Canterbury cohort Tracy Fickling (Allenton) is also among the qualifiers after two more comfortable wins. There are six other visitors through: Wendy Green (Ngongotaha), Tia Moka (Homai), Estelle Hickey (Carlton Cornwall), Robyn Fisher (Royal Oak), Diane Strawbridge (Kensington) and Sheryl Wellington (Mairangi Bay). The three Taranaki qualifiers to date are Elaine Hodge (New Plymouth), Trish Howard (West End) and Cindy Nicoll (Inglewood).

There are a host of other teams lurking nearby. Twenty-six have won three games and 12 are on two wins. It means that 33 are already eliminated, some of who will take the second bite of the cherry in the Marbles Restaurant pairs, which starts tomorrow.

Green has received a work-out in section play. That occurred again in the fourth round yesterday against Petone Central's Sandy Booth, a past Wellington open pairs winner.

Green took the match 23-16. Green led 14-7 before Booth closed to 16-15 behind after 17 ends. However, Green won seven singles thereafter to take the match.

Moka joined Green as the first of the qualifiers from section two when her well-balanced side defeated Te Kuiti's Pania Reed 29-15, having beaten three-winner Ange Debique (Stratford-Avon) 27-17 after finishing strongly.



One of the outstanding finishes of the day Her side stopped the unbeaten run of Rhonda came in the morning at Waitara when Hodge Adams (Fitzroy) 27-20.

squeaked past Marlene Alberino-Kay (Island Maree Gadsby (Fitzroy) raised two wins to sit Bay) 25-24. Hodge had looked powerful early, comfortably on three. That included a commanding 29-14 victory over Rachelle Morrison (Omokoroa) in the morning. Morrison leading 13-2 after seven ends, before the Wellingtonians clawed back into it.

The scores were even playing the last end, and the shot changed four times there before Hodge got the nod. Hodge rounded out the day by eliminating Gayle Melrose (Tauranga) 28-17.

Alberino-Kay kept her best hopes alive, beating Pania Roberts (Opononi) 27-24, but the fourth win today won't come easy. Both their opponents, Howard and Fickling, have already attained their qualification.

Melrose wasn't alone in exiting, with some other well-known names also incurring loss

No 3, including Dianne Patterson (Gonville-Castlecliff, Anne Lomas (Far North RSA) and Cathy Andrews (Paritutu).

The majority of the three winners should qualify. Included in that group is defending title-holder Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga), her loss coming 28-16 to former Whanganui representative teammate, Patterson. But Constantine replied in kind after lunch.

Heather Johns (Paritutu) is also in that category. After a win and a loss on Tuesday, Johns certainly didn't want to drop her round three match against Kathy Dempster-Rivett (Whakatane). But it was heading that way at the commencement of the last end, the BOP side leading 20-18. Johns, though, with a drawn five, took the match 23-20.

Dempster-Rivett put the disappointment to

one side in securing a third win in the afternoon.

Both Southland teams in the field, Sharon Siegruhn (Northend) and Marilyn Fletcher (Lumsden), finished the day with three wins as well.

Three teams performed the perfect reversal and after two losses on Tuesday won twice yesterday. They were Fay Jones (North End), Karen de Jongh (Hinuera) and Brenda Rowe (Waitara).

Win summary after the second day's play

Standings after day two in the 74th Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours yesterday:

Section 1: four wins, none; three wins, Chris Commane (Opunake), Hetty Bolscher (Pukekohe), Sharon Siegruhn (Northend), Ruth Spittle (Taradale), Jackie Morgan (Kia Toa), Irene Taunt (Tower); **two wins,** Lee Howard (West End); **three wins,** Marlene Al-McDonald (Mercury Bay), Viv Hall (West End).

Section 2: four wins, Wendy Green (Ngongotaha), Tia Moka (Homai); **three wins,** Maree Gadsby (Fitzroy), Ange Debique (Stratford-Avon), Rachelle Morrison (Omokoroa); **two wins,** Sandy Booth (Petone Central), Fay Jones (North End).

Section 3: four wins, Estelle Hickey (Carlton Cornwall); **three wins,** Rhonda Adams (Fitzroy), Pat Dixon (Naenae), Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga), Linda Kape (Okato), Denise Cottam (West End); **two wins,** Tereska Knap (Miramar).

Section 4: four wins, Robyn Fisher (Royal Oak); **three wins,** Barbara Harvey (Paritutu), Adele French (Thames Coast), Marilyn Fletcher (Lumsden), Wendy Sarjeant (Mangawhai); **two wins,** Val Symes (New Plymouth), Kristin Stampa (Stratford-Avon).

Section 5: four wins, Elaine Hodge (New Plymouth), Tracy Fickling (Allenton), Trish berino-Kay (Island Bay); **two wins,** Pania Roberts (Opononi), Barbara Hewitt (Taradale), Karen de Jongh (Hinuera).

Section 6: four wins, Diane Strawbridge (Kensington); **three wins,** Ngaire McKinley (Omarunui), Kathy Dempster-Rivett (Whakatane), Heather Johns (Paritutu), Anne Mahon (Katikati); **two wins,** Janice Ropitini (West End).

Section 7: four wins, Cindy Nicoll (Inglewood), Sheryl Wellington (Mairangi Bay), Hazel Littlejohn (Darfield); **three wins,** Chris Telford (Napier), Marlene Foster (Wanganui East), Lynn Clifford (Mercury Bay); **two wins,** Brenda Rowe (Waitara).