

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

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First-time visitors survive nailbiter to advance

Marlene Alberino-Kay and her Island Bay team are loving their first experience of The Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours. And there is still more to come for Alberino-Kay, Carmela Ercolano, Robyn Lindsay and Assunta Ercolano as they contest the third round of post section this morning at West End.

Alberino-Kay is a vastly experienced player in the Italian-strong Island Bay club and community. She holds six Wellington centre titles in total — three were won under her former surname of Kay — and the most recent, the Easter pairs, was won in 2025 with Lindsay.

The Ercolanos are third-year players, with mother Assunta playing No 3 this week, while daughter Carmela, who will represent Wellington in the under-eights Hexagonal representative fixture next month, leads.

"We are loving the 25 end games," Alberino-Kay said. "The other tournaments are getting too short now and are more like galas."

After sitting out a morning round bye, the Island Bay side was involved in one of three grandstand finishes in the afternoon. They ended up on the right side of the ledger, beating Fitzroy's Rhonda Adams 24-23.

Adams had stated the match well, leading 10-3 after seven ends. But the Wellingtonians turned it around to such an extent that seven ends later it had become 19-11. Adams then got on a roll, closing the margin to one point after 20 ends, and a two on the penultimate head levelled the scores.

Ercolanos junior drew the shot, before Fitzroy outdid it. Ercolanos senior then turned out that bowl to hold the advantage. Adams, with a weighted bowl, dislodged the jack but it left Island Bay still with the shot and the game.

This morning Alberino-Kay will meet Adele French (Thames Coast), who went through after lunch 32-11 over Hazel Littlejohn (Darfield). French clearly had benefitted from

playing tin the morning, when Littlejohn sat out the bye. French's morning win, though, 23-22 over Cindy Nicoll (Inglewood) became much more tense than was anticipated. French had led there 17-7 after 12 ends, before Nicoll won six successive ends to level at 17-all. French led by two playing the last with Nicoll only managing a single.

The other two titanic afternoon matches saw victories to two Hawke's Bay teams — Chris Telford (Napier) and Lyn Rae (Kia Toa).

Telford's side in fact had two nailbiters on the day. Firstly they edged Trish Howard (West End) 21-19, having trailed 18-14 with four ends to play, and then nosed Rachelle Morrison (Omokoroa) 20-18.

Morrison had a 6-2 lead in the early exchanges before Telford's side applied the pressure to open up a 17-8 after 17 ends. Morrison chipped away but was still in the cactus at 18-12 in arrears after 22 ends. However, a four, followed by a two, levelled the scores.

It was the Napier side that drew the better on the last end, and Morrison's last attempt on the draw, with perfect weight, was just a little narrow to miss out.

Rae has taken over the skipping of the Kia Toa side, with Jackie Morgan now leading. They beat Paritutu's Heather Johns 22-21. Johns led 8-2 before the game tightened and from the 15th end onwards they were never separated by more than two shots.

Johns led by one playing the last end, before Carol Lukes joined the party, setting up the Bay side to grab a brace and secure their last eight berth.



The only other Taranaki side, in addition to Adams and Johns, to feature in the afternoon, was West End's Susan Cottam. After her side had beaten Tracy Fickling (Allenton) 22-9 in the morning round, Cottam made a promising start against Northland Gold Star holder Wendy Sarjeant in the afternoon, leading 8-4. Sarjeant got in front on the 11th head. It was to be a lead her side was not to relinquish. Five successive ends took the visitors from 17-15 after 18 ends to 24-15 after 23 heads, to sew the game up.

It means that the sole survivor from Taranaki is New Plymouth's Elaine Hodge. Her side comfortably beat Lynn Clifford (Mercury Bay) 23-11 to earn the afternoon off. This morning they meet Tia Moka (Homai). The winner of that match will then meet the victor of the Alberino-Kay/French contest in a quarterfinal this afternoon.

The other three quarterfinals will be played this morning at West End — Sarjeant plays Rae, Telford meets Lesley McLinden (Royal

Oak), and Sheryl Wellington (Marigani Bay) squares off with Estelle Hickey (Carlton Cornwall).

McLinden, who won the national club pairs in 2024 and in fact plays for the Bridge Park club, ran away from Pat Dixon (Naenae) 29-3 in the afternoon. McLinden had ended the title hopes of Wendy Green (Ngongotaha) 23-19 in the morning. One point separated the teams with two ends remaining, but McLinden finished with a brace and a single.

Hickey defeated Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga), the defending champion, 22-9 in a consistent team effort, pulling away from 10-7 after 11 ends.

Wellington's side eliminated the last remaining south island team, Marilyn Fletcher (Lumsden), 20-14 in the afternoon. The North Harbour quartet sit with a 7-0 record for the week, which is no surprise considering both Wellington and Jan Gledhill hold gold stars, while lead Theresa Rogers has a bar to her star. Colleen Rice completes the side.

Fours results and pairs draw for today

Results of post section play in The Devon Hotel Taranaki women's Open fours at West End yesterday:

Section 1, round 2: Wendy Sarjeant (Mangawhai) 29 Diane Strawbridge (Kensington) 14, Susan Cottam (West End) 22 Tracy Fickling (Allenton) 9, Heather Johns (Paritutu) 34 Ngaire McKinley (Omarunui) 11, Lyn Rae (Kia Toa) 29 Ruth Spittle (Taradale) 8, Marilyn Fletcher (Lumsden) 23 Anne Mahon (Katikati) 22, Sheryl Wellington (Mairangi Bay) 30 Linda Kape (Okato) 11, Marilyn Constantine (Tauranga) 23 Fay Jones (North End) 14, Estelle Hickey (Carlton Cornwall) 27 Hetty Bolscher (Pukekohe) 16. **Round 3:** Sarjeant 24 Cottam 16, Rae 22 Johns 21, Wellington 20 Fletcher 14, Hickey 22 Constantine 9.

Section 2, round 1: Adele French (Thames Coast) 23 Cindy Nicoll (Inglewood) 22.

Round 2: Pat Dixon (Naenae) 18 Sharon Siegruhn (Northend) 17, Lesley McLinden (Royal Oak) 23 Wendy Green (Ngongotaha) 19, Rachelle Morrison (Omokoroa) 26 Barbara

Harvey (Paritutu) 12, Chris Telford (Napier) 21 Trish Howard (West End) 19, Elaine Hodge (New Plymouth) 23 Lynn Clifford (Mercury Bay) 11, Tia Moka (Homai) 32 Kathy Dempster-Rivett (Whakatane) 24, Marlene Alberino-Kay (Island Bay) 24 Rhonda Adams (Fitzroy) 23, French 32 Hazel Littlejohn (Darfield) 11. **Round 3:** McLinden 29 Dixon 3, Telford 19 Morrison 18.

Draw for this morning at 9am, round 3: Hodge v Moka, Alberino-Kay v French.

Round 4: Sarjeant v Rae, Wellington v Hickey, McLinden v Telford.

Draw for post section play in the women's Open fours-pairs event at West End today, commencing at 8.45am, round 1: Angela Debique (Opunake) v Colleen Short (Blockhouse Bay), Tereska Knap (Miramar) v Kristin Stampa (Stratford-Avon). **Round 2:** Irene Taunt (Tower) v Pip Rawson (Miramar), Julie Inwood (Taradale) v Maree Gadsby (Fitzroy). **Round 2 (11am start):** Sue Carroll (Howick) v Di Patterson (Gonville-Castlecliff).