

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

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Dix the star turn as title heads to Auckland

Playing superb bowls 30-year-old Brody Dix was the star turn as he skipped his New Lynn side to victory in the 113th Taranaki men's Open fours at the Paritutu greens in New Plymouth on last evening.

Dix turned on a brilliant display of bowls in the final as his side of Adam Wishnoski, Keith Ansell and Gary Dougherty overcame Paritutu's Don Christensen, Allan Batley, Rodger Hassall and skip Darren Goodin 29-16.

Dix converted four of the opening ends from negatives into positives and that gave the New Lynn side the confidence that it could win the match. They edged ahead to 7-4 after seven ends when an early tea break was called.

On the return, Dix rode his luck. Three down on the head and attacking, he came off a wing bowl and spliced the jack back into the ditch. It left New Lynn with three shots and it retained those when Goodin's final bowl tittered on the ditch before flopping in. Goodin added two fine shots on the next end to give Paritutu four, meaning at 10-8 the game was still alive. But Dix magically trailed the jack, when one down, on the next end to net a count of four.

It became a game changer, with the New Lynn team playing more confidently and building better heads.

With No 2 Ansell in particular playing great bowls, Dix moved further in front, extending the lead to 20-9. Goodin pulled it back to 22-15 with five ends remaining.

But New Lynn finished the stronger.

On the 21st end, when one down, Goodin, attacked the head but ended up three down.

Two ends later, when trailing by 12, Paritutu held a five, but Dix expertly reduced it to one with his final bowl when playing with two metres of weight he rested on the shot



New Lynn's finest: Keith Ansell, Adam Wishnoski, Gary Dougherty and Brody Dix — 2018 Taranaki Open winners.

bowl. Goodin drove, attempting to remove Dix's bowl but missed.

That left the Paritutu side chasing what was an improbable 11 of the last two ends and when the jack finished up in the ditch, that became an impossible task as first Dougherty and then Dix, appropriately, drew to within centimetres of the board.

The two points rounded off the scoring at 29-16.

Dix rated the victory as his biggest in bowls, having previously won four centre titles in Counties as well as one in Nelson.

Wishnoski, Ansell and Dougherty all previously combined to win the 2014 Auckland fours.

All four Paritutu players have tasted success before in the Open and they were again deserving finalists, but they too agreed that one team was clearly superior in the decider.

Semifinals recap: New Lynn win easily as Paritutu defeat West End

In the semifinals yesterday morning, the Brody Dix-skipped New Lynn side ran away from Noel Probyn's Fitzroy team 24-6 in one semifinal, with only 18 of the scheduled 25 ends completed.

In the other semi, Darren Goodin's Paritutu team defeated West End's Ross Henderson 25-19

Adam Wishnoski set New Lynn up against the Probyn side, with Tony Walsh leading, Nigel Newton at two and Ian Mahoney skipping. And on the rare occasions that Dix was down on the head early in the game, he converted. After five ends, New Lynn led 9-0 before the Fitzroy side opened its account. However, it didn't change the dynamics of the game as by the conclusion of the 11th end, New Lynn had surged in front 19-1.

It didn't matter what the Fitzroy side attempted, the jack always seemed to move the other way and they could only find holes when looking for rests.

Goodin was again in fine touch in his game

against Henderson's side of Norm Broughton, Martin Dravitzki and John Garrud.

A two and a three on the two ends prior to morning tea gave Goodin a 17-9 buffer and he appeared comfortable in leading 22-11 after 17 ends.

However, a mini fight-back from Henderson had the score back to 23-17 with three ends remaining.

Goodin then secured a single before the vital penultimate head was delivered.

Broughton drew two wonderful shots, completing an excellent tournament for the left-hander, and when Garrud added another, things started to get interesting.

Goodin drove, dislodging the jack to the side. Henderson still had two and added a third with his first bowl. However, Goodin drew the shot back and Henderson was unable to remove it.

Attempting to kill the 25th and final end, when chasing eight, Henderson put the jack into the ditch which extinguished any hope.

Cottam and Andrews overcome mid-game blues to claim second pairs title

Paritutu's Steve Cottam and Ian Andrews overcame some mid-game blues to claim their second pairs title in three years on their home greens yesterday.

The duo withstood a spirited fight from Jim Priest (Oakura) and Aidan Zittersteijn (Paritutu), taking the title 22-19.

A maximum count of six one-third of the way through the game, when Priest and Zittersteijn were both wayward with all of their bowls, propelled Cottam and Andrews to a 12-4 lead. But then the composite pair responded, with Zittersteijn, the Cook Island representative in waiting, showing maturity beyond his years in the skipping berth.

They leveled the scores at 12-all after 12 ends and then moved ahead. Priest, gunning for back-to-back titles — he won the same event last year with Adam Collins — led 19-16 with four ends remaining.

But it was Cottam and Andrews who drew better on the closing ends. They edged closer with a single, before grabbing a three and then another single on the penultimate end, to

create a two-shot advantage playing the last end.

Cottam drew the shot with his last bowl and despite an excellent attempt with his last runner, Zittersteijn was unable to wrestle the shot off his clubmates.

"We're thrilled to win it," Andrews said afterwards. "It was a tough match. I think Jim still has beaten me more than I have beaten him, and Aidan showed why he has such a big future."

In the semifinals, Cottam and Andrews beat Evan Jones and Ron Gadsby (Fitzroy) 21-13, while Priest and Zittersteijn edged John Forde and Paul Digby (Stratford-Avon) 19-17, after the scores had been even playing the last.



Steve Cottam and Ian Andrews

