

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

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New Executive Officer looks forward to Open

Bowls Taranaki executive officer Peter Scott, pictured right, is confident that all bowlers taking part in this week's Taranaki men's Open fours event should be suitably impressed with the greens and the tournament in general.

Scott took over the executive officer's job in May after stalwart Neville Elliott retired. But the Open fours is not uncommon to Scott who competed in the event for a number of years whilst living in Wellington, Wanganui and Taranaki. His involvement extended when he was a Taranaki executive member and he also acted as a section supervisor on a number of occasions.

"Even with that previous experience, this has still been a big learning curve," Scott said. "But I've been fortunate that Neville Elliott has assisted me greatly, as have the Taranaki Board."

"I don't believe in reinventing the wheel, but at the same time, we must also think outside the square. I'm looking forward to meeting new faces and old friends and gauging their feedback as the week unfolds."

If there was a criticism of last year's event, it was that the standard of some greens was a little below previous seasons.

"There has been a greater emphasis put on that this time around by the greenkeeper's advisory panel and the information we have is that players should be satisfied with the standard that they encounter."

Even though the Open involved long days, for the bowls purist, the event remains an attractive proposition. "We accept that the length of the tournament may not be to everyone's liking, but we take the positivity in the entries as an indication that many do."

This year's event has attracted 160 teams, which is down on six from last year. Visiting numbers are up slightly, with the reduction



coming from Taranaki sides. "We are thrilled to see our Australian numbers increase, and delighted that Graeme Rossiter and his team from Tumut in the Blue Mountains are here, despite their close proximity to the bush fires that have affected Australia."

Those 160 teams are split into 12 sections that will play for the next four days at various locations from Waitara in the north, to Oakura in the west, to Stratford in the south. The format has remained unchanged for the last 70 years, with two games of 25 ends per day. Teams must win six of their eight qualifying games by the end of Thursday to make post section on Friday.

Changes to the draw

Following the withdrawal of two sides from the competition, section four has been redrawn and now is a 12-team section only. A copy of the new draw for this section is available on the Bowls Taranaki website (www.taranakibowls.co.nz) and at headquarters, which is again located at Paritutu. Paritutu's Darren Goodin has been transferred from section four to 12, where he becomes team number seven.

Plenty of teams with dreams in Open

Spread throughout the 12 sections are a number of very strong teams, who in addition to enjoying all the social aspects of the Open, will also harbour hopes of putting together some positive results on the green. Here is a brief summary of the potential leading lights in each section:

Section 1: Ian Andrews (Paritutu) becomes one of the few Presidents of Taranaki to play in the Open whilst in office. He skips a good side, while that most familiar face, Rex Holmes (Paraparaumu Beach), returns again. Ian Coombe (Mairangi Bay), Scotty McGavin (Bulls) and Bill Barwood (Claudelands) are regular qualifiers.

Section 2: Jeremy Brosnan (Glen Eden) skips a more than useful side out the Queen City, while Allan Bowler (Frankton Junction) has given a good account of himself over the years in the PBA series. Mark Cameron (Riverhead) becomes the first Bowls NZ CEO to compete in the Open. He skips a junior side in the event.

Section 3: Expect some casualties from a strong looking group. Neil Candy (West End), who was part of the winning four in the Dominion last season, consistent visitor Cary Pinker (Wanganui East), Neil Clarke (Hillcrest), Keith Ansell (who was part of the winning New Lynn team in 2018) and long-serving Canterbury representative, Paul Matheson (Halswell), are all in the group. And that makes no mention of former Bowls NZ chairman John Carter (Hutt) who regularly qualifies.

Section 4: Craig De Faria (West End), the defending titleholder, appears the most likely side from the group to still be standing on Sunday. Anton Ferrari (Naenae), Shane O'Hara (Mercury Bay) and Terry Cullen (Helensville) are all sides capable of stringing wins together.

Section 5: The most prominent name is Geoff Hawken, who won the event in 1988, three years after winning the Dominion pairs.

Hawken has been living on the Gold Coast now for 25 years and teams up this year with three of his sons. David Hood (Kerikeri), Gerry O'Sullivan (Inglewood) and Mort Jones (Hillcrest) should all be competitive.

Section 6: Dan Delany (Royal Oak) is seeking a fifth Open crown. He is becoming an Open veteran with over 20 Opens under his belt, despite being aged in only his early 40s. Neil Fisher (Howick, but entered under the Sunshine Coast banner this week), Gerrard Slattery (Tui Park) and Steve Liddington (Hillcrest), who was educated in the sport by that Open legend Robbie Robson, are other likely teams in the group.

Section 7: Two former Taranaki players, the 2014 winner Kevin Smith (Hinuera) and the 1983 runner-up John Dick (Marton), meet first up at Vogeltown today. But they will both find plenty of challenges in the qualifying rounds. Ian Lowry's family side that originate in the bowls world from Rahotu have regularly upset higher profile sides, Taylor Horn (Mangere) won the Dominion singles last year, John Claydon (Masterton) was a semifinalist four years ago, while the up-and-coming Bruce Lilley (West End), with father Gary in the team, will ensure the visitors don't get everything their own way.

Section 8: Despite not chasing the big stuff anymore, Peter Belliss (Aramoho), remains a big attraction to every event he enters. Further, many will claim a victory over him in any match as a career highlight, yet he remains a gentleman about it all. He is joined by Dennis Brewster (Whangarei), Leon Wech (Mairangi Bay) and Grant Pease (Fitzroy). Popular visitor, Brent Mason (Takaro), returns again after missing last year.

Section 9: After De Faria in section 4, the next best local hope could well be Bruce Phillips (Tower). His side lost out on the last bowl in the quarterfinals last year. Of the visitors, watch out for Kevin Coombe (Aramoho) and Daniel Geaney (Blockhouse Bay).



Section 10: Ray Park (Wanganui), who represented NZ in the over 60s trans-Tasman in November, remains a high performer. Richie Muir (Wanaka) is an emerging prospect from Otago Central and his opening match against Terry Osment (Johnsonville) at Waitara will set the victor up for the week. On an adjacent rink, John Sexton (West End) will tackle Mike Cavanagh (Pukekohe).

Section 11: Dan Dickison (Tauranga) comes from rich bowling stock. The nephew of the last NZ bowls man to win gold at the Commonwealth Games, Ian, he is an established and talented player now based in Bay of Plenty. The section also includes three-time champion Noel Probyn (Fitzroy) and 2006 Dominion fours winner Ross Thorn (Naenae). Those three will all run into two past winners during qualifying, Bruce Stewart (Havelock North) and Brody Dix (Papakura), the 2018 victor pictured right. Unlikely rain is the best chance of all five still being alive on Friday.

Section 12: Brian Little (Palmerston North) has contested four of the last nine finals and should feature again. The addition of Darren Goodin (Paritutu) will add further complications to the group, which also includes North Harbour livewire Garry Banks (Beach Haven), Wellington gold star holder Howard Ivory (Wilton) and Murray Dickson (Pakuranga).



42 get practice in at West End

42 teams took the opportunity to get in some extra practice at West End yesterday, with the vast majority of the sides from outside Taranaki.

“We were delighted, once again, with the response we have had from visitors. The day went off very well,” organiser Graeme McDowell said.

Three games were played during the day as a number of teams looked to iron out combinations ahead of the big stuff today.

The prize-winning skips were:

Green 1:

1. Tony Walsh (Fitzroy) 3 wins
2. Ross Thorn (Naenae) 2.5 wins +12

3. Mike Oldfield (Tauranga South) 2.5 wins +10
4. Richie Muir (Wanaka) and Paul Darbyshire (Northern) 2 wins +14 (equal)

Green 2:

1. Steve Brien (Stokes Valley) 3 wins
2. Paul Hassall (Tawa) 2 wins +18
3. Ray Williams (Australia) 2 wins +12
4. Wayne Heron (Tui Park) 2 wins +8

Green 3:

1. Neil Candy (West End) 3 wins +18
2. Mike Paton (Orewa) 3 wins +16
3. Greg Oldridge (Johnston Park) 2 wins +12
4. Dennis Layden (Australia) 2 wins +17



De Faria side back to defend title

It took Craig De Faria, pictured right, and his West End side nearly two hours in last year's event to score a point, the 2019 victorious skip recalled over the weekend.

"I thought that 'this is going to be a long week'," De Faria said. His side of Jordan Linn, Dave Wilson and Steve Walker lost their first game in section play to Tauranga South's Mike Oldfield on the Fitzroy greens.

"It took us the best part of two hours to even get on the board in that first game," De Faria said.

But after the early hiccup the West End side proceeded through the rest of the event without another loss, defeating Brian Little and his Palmerston North side of Ian Monaghan and the Henn brothers, Brian and Ron, 24-13 in the final.

"It is a very difficult tournament to win, but it is so enjoyable to compete in. I'm looking forward to meeting new players again this year."

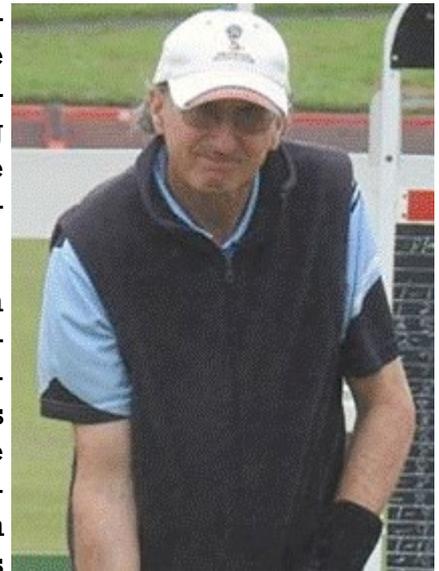
This will be the sixth-straight year that the De Faria side has competed in the event as a unit. Last year was the first time that the team advanced into Saturday's play, having previously being eliminated in Friday's rounds.

"There is a definite advantage of playing together so long as a team. We are compatible."

The De Faria side, which successfully defended its Taranaki centre fours title in November, again shapes up as one of the teams to beat in 2020.

"We will give it another crack. But everything has go your way. I remember in the last 16 last year we were playing Rex Holmes. We had a really good game. Rex would play up and miss by nothing. I guess it was just our turn."

Speaking superstitiously, De Faria said his side is delighted to be returning to Fitzroy again this morning to commence from the same location as they did in 2019. They begin their defence against tidy Inglewood draw bowler Don Gyde.



Match of the morning—Candy v Matheson

One of the more interesting battles will take place at Oakura, which makes a welcome return to hosting the Open this morning.

Neil Candy (West End) and Paul Matheson (Halswell) square off in section three.

Candy skips Steve Temperton, brother Bruce Candy and Taranaki gold star holder John Garrud.

Matheson, who has won two NZ intercentre titles with Canterbury, has a more than useful side with him, comprising regular teammate Darryl Hawker, Lawrence Quek and Kevin Greenwood, the 1998 Dominion fours winner.

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