

Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

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Rahotu and Opunake open in style

The Rahotu and Opunake clubs no longer host play in the Taranaki Open fours. But both clubs gave a reminder yesterday that they still know what the game is all about.

Both Rahotu and Opunake have two teams each entered in the 2021 competition and all four of them ended the opening day with the perfect record.

In previous years, Rahotu, and to a lesser extent, Opunake, have hosted play in the Open — especially in the halcyon days, like 1980 when a record 576 teams took part.

The two Opunake sides unbeaten are headed by Rodney Woods and Paddy Deegan, while the Rahotu teams are skipped by Ian Lowry and Peter Charteris.

Opunake's effort was particularly impressive. For a number of years Woods and Deegan have combined together in the Open.

But with an influx of new players and to aid their development, Woods and Deegan elected to spread the talent. It has proved an insightful and successful decision.

Woods skips specialist lead Bob Commane and juniors Daryl MacKenzie and Kewene Ratahi, while Deegan is in charge of Peter Clement, Harry Davy and Kevin Ratahi.

Woods' wins came over George Markie (Vogeltown) 22-17 and 25-22 against Mike Hori, who actually lives in Taranaki but skips a Methven team that includes his father, Allan Hill. Hori had opened with a win.

Deegan defeated Roger Sutton (Epsom) 24-17 and first-round winner, Paul Digby (Stratford-Avon), 25-16.

Both Rahotu teams are skipped by experienced bowlers — in Lowry and Charteris.

Lowry now plays out of the Takaro club in Palmerston North but remains well-known in Taranaki with four centre titles .

His roots are firmly in his native Rahotu. He skips three uncles, Alec, Gil and Des.

Gil is a Wellington gold star holder and was runner-up in the 2009 Open with Mark Noble. Ian, Alec and Des have played together for a number of years. Prior to Gil joining the team, Ian's father, Snow, played, with a semifinal position in 2014 their best effort.

The Lowrys broke free over the closing ends of their morning clash against Jim Cornish (Omarunui) to win 27-20 and then beat Dion Davis (Kaikohe) 32-14 after lunch.

Davis had sneaked past the well-performed Kevin Coombe (Aramoho) by one shot in the morning, although the Wanganui side got back on track in the afternoon with a 30-17 win over Bill Foley (New Plymouth).

Perhaps the greatest tail belonged to the Charteris side. He has Gavyn Horo at No 3, and two highly promising teenagers up front — Horo's son, Camron, and Nathan Goodin.

Camron Horo, pictured right, has been in particularly good touch of late, with the 15-year-old qualifying in the Taranaki open singles earlier in the month.

Charteris' side opened with a 21-16 win over Iain Opray (Hutt), the holder of four centre titles in the Capital.

In round two they beat the 2014 winner, Kevin Smith (Hinuera), 20-9.

Both Smith and Opray finished with one win. Smith's team excludes his long-time team mate, Stu Settle, with Gerard Slattery now included, along with Bruce Milne and Brendon Brill.

* Hillcrest club also unbeaten — page three.



Showers cause some delays; 45 unbeaten

Despite heavy rain mid-morning organisers breathed a sigh of relief with all 12 sections getting through two rounds on day one of the 116th Taranaki men's Open fours yesterday.

The showers, which were strong but short, did cause some greens to flood, especially at Fitzroy.

As a result a number of greens were running slower than normal. "We like to have greens running at a minimum of 16 seconds," Grant Hassall said. "But clearly that wasn't the case yesterday, and with more rain coming again today, the pace is unlikely to improve until later in the week."

At Fitzroy, the last of the morning games were finished just before 7pm last evening, after four of the games had been thwarted by the 1.30pm time restriction.

One of the more intriguing ones was between Rex Holmes (Paraparaumu Beach) and Gerry O'Sullivan (Inglewood). Holmes, a three-time runner-up, prevailed 19-18. Both had previously recorded wins in round two.

Holmes is joined by a further 44 teams who slept the easiest over night after emerging with untarnished records.

Among those leading lights were Peter Belliss (Aramoho), Craig De Faria (West End), defending champion Bruce Phillips (Tower), Ray Park (Wanganui), Brian Little (Palmerston North) and Paul Matheson (Halswell).

Matheson was a 31-14 victor in the feature game of the morning against Royal Oak's Neville Hill. Hill in fact led in the game, with Sam Tolohe skipping.

The Canterbury side held the upper hand for most of the match, with counts of five (13th end) and six (17th end) inflating the score.

Four-time champion Dan Delany (Royal Oak) started the day playing No 3 for Teo Turua. They had a ding-dong battle with Mike Oldfield (Tauranga South) which the Bay of Plenty side took 20-19.

Oldfield led 10-0 after six ends, but through 16 heads, the ledger had been levelled at 13-all.

At the start of the last end, Oldfield led by two, but Turua held two shots. However, Old-

field rose to the occasion and rested on the second shot to secure victory.

Delany took over the skipping reins in the afternoon and got home easily 25-8 over Kerry Parker (Bannockburn).

After a tough tussle in the second round, against the well-appointed Victoria (Wellington) side skipped by Raymond Martin, Oldfield went down 30-20.

Martin had beaten Hawera Park's Kearin Pollard 31-22 in an interesting opening encounter. Martin led 18-5 after 13 ends before Pollard's team roared into life.

They levelled after 20 ends, and were still in touch at the commencement of the scheduled penultimate end, albeit Martin held a two-shot lead. There, however, the issue was finalised with Martin picking up a seven.

In the same section, Grant Pease (Fitzroy), whose team is being skipped by John Gray, opened with two big wins.

Jeremy Brosnan (Glen Eden), Taylor Horn (Mangere) and Aiden Takarua, three of the more youthful skips in the Open, were emphatic on day one.

Brosnan raised a noteworthy 24-15 opening win over Mark Anderson (Tower) and then ousted Rangi Hiroti (Inglewood) 32-8.

Horn opened 25-10 against Graeme Goss (Thames Coast) but it wasn't quite as comfortable in the afternoon in beating George Margie (Vogeltown) 25-21.

Takarua's side only arrived from Auckland in the early hours of Monday morning. But they conceded just eight shots during the day — with wins over Dennis Gladding (Waimea) 39-5 and Alan Niwa (Okato) 35-3.

Cary Pinker (Wanganui East) had two nail-biting matches. In the morning round, playing former Taranaki rugby rep Bill Read (Paritutu), Pinker ran off Read's shot bowl on the last end to win 24-23. But in the afternoon, Pinker was edged 22-21 by Ian Adams, after the Lepperton lead Don Hodge drew a toucher on the last end.

The turnaround of the day went to Joe Johanson (Bay View). His side fell 30-4 to Leon Wech before beating John Sexton (West End).



Hillcrest unbeaten after day one

There was a special cheer that went up from the Hillcrest club in Hamilton yesterday. It has three sides entered and all won twice — Malcolm Moore, Steve Liddington (pictured right) and Mort Jones.

Jones is teamed with Tony Gray, and in continuing with the strong association between Hillcrest and Inglewood, two players from Inglewood — Kevin Koch, a second-year player, and Len Spick, a most competent competitor at the indoor code.

Jones fought hard for a 26-24 win over Martin Smithies (Lyall Bay) and then beat Roger Sutton (Epsom) 30-25.

Moore has a solid side with Gary Lambly, Maurice Parker and Neil Clarke. They received a tough examination in round one, edging past Ian Newland (Mt Maunganui) 25-23 before beating Peter Radich (Oakura) 21-16.

Liddington's quartet is Merv Gibbons, Eddie Knox and Phil Morgan.

Their victories came at the expense of West End's Darren Scott (24-16) and Miramar's Carl Northcott (26-18).



MATCH OF THE MORNING

There a number of clashes this morning involving two teams with two wins each. But interest at Oakura in section seven will centre on Grant Pease (Fitzroy) and Steve Smith (Kensington).

Pease is teamed with Jason Hazard, Des Brophy and John Gray, while in Smith's team are the 2015 runner-up George Lyddiard, Garry Seddon and David Hooper.

Both teams hit 30 twice on day one.

Teams winning two games on the first day

Section 1: Stefan McCartain (Paritutu), Steve Liddington (Hillcrest), Peter Doreen (Far North RSA).

Section 2: Mort Jones (Hillcrest), Paddy Deegan (Opunake), Ian Lowry (Rahotu).

Section 3: Bruce Phillips (Tower), Dan Dickison (Tauranga), David Nightingale (Glendowie).

Section 4: Jeremy Brosnan (Glen Eden), Graham Crawford (Paritutu), Tony Stoker (Naenae), Marty Doak (Far North RSA).

Section 5: Aiden Takarua (Pt Chevalier), Dean Elgar (West End), Keith Ansell (New Lynn), Gary Rseck (Omokoroa).

Section 6: Peter Lange (Te Kuiti), John Carter (Hutt), Garry Murfitt (West End), Mike Paton (Orewa), Paul Matheson (Halswell), Logan Palmer (Wanganui).

Section 7: Steve Smith (Kensington), Grant Pease (Fitzroy), Raymond Martin (Victoria).

Section 8: Barry Wakely (Omarunui), Anton Ferrari (Wilton), Brian Little (Palmerston North).

Section 9: Craig De Faria (West End), Andrew Bowden (Parklands), Mike Cavanagh (Pukekohe).

Section 10: Rex Holmes (Paraparaumu Beach), Warren Bellringer (New Plymouth), Wayne Ruka (Pringle Park), Malcolm Moore (Hillcrest), Ray Park (Wanganui).

Section 11: Barry Allison (Far North RSA), Darren Goodin (Paritutu), Paul Hassall (Tawa), Ron Ranford (Fitzroy), Peter Belliss (Aramoho).

Section 12: Peter Charteris (Rahotu), Taylor Horn (Mangere), Rodney Woods (Opunake).



Bowls NZ president enjoying his first Open

Bowls New Zealand President, Mark O'Connor, pictured right, is loving his first Taranaki Open fours.

O'Connor is playing in a team skipped by Garry Banks. It also includes Bowls NZ CEO Mark Cameron and John Aufai.

"It's great. I'd heard so much about this tournament," O'Connor said. "But this is very impressive."

O'Connor said that the comradeship between the teams was an early feature and clearly one of the main reasons why the tournament is so popular.

"The competition can't be denied but despite that the friendliness is so evident."

"This clearly is a prestigious event on the New Zealand calendar. I'm delighted to be here."

O'Connor is in his second year as New Zealand president and has impressed many with his openness, willingness to travel and general interaction with players.

"I enjoy talking with as many players as possible. We have a great game here and I'm pleased to be spreading the good word."

At the opening ceremony, Bowls Taranaki chairman Grant Hassall indicated that having the Bowls New Zealand president play in the Open was not overly common, but appreciated.

John Carter was the last president to play in the Open during his term, while prior to that Malcolm Kidd had also done so.

"Malcolm made the semifinals of the Open in the year that he was president, so, Mark, you have no pressure!"

O'Connor's team opened the tournament with a 19-17 win over John Ape-Esera (Waitara) but bowed 36-26 to Aad Schrader (Okato) in the afternoon.



Bowls New Zealand president, Mark O'Connor, gets one away sweetly during the opening rounds at Paritutu yesterday.

Despite that, O'Connor remained upbeat. "I'd certainly like another couple of wins during the week. But regardless, it's still a buzz to be involved."

Carter, who gave the best part of 30 years to the administration of the sport, including serving on the world body for two years and as chairman of Bowls NZ, made a positive start.

Playing with his regular team of Bruce Woodhouse, Don McMurray and Bill Jackson, Carter started the week with two strong wins. Backing up on a last 16 finish in 2020, the Hutt quartet put on an impressive showing to beat Dennis Leighton (Paritutu) 35-6 and Ray Hudson (Central Levin) 26-4.

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