

# Open News - Taranaki Open Fours

Thursday, January 21, 2021

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## 12 teams go through the easy way

The achievement of winning six games out of eight and qualifying remains a significant feat in the Taranaki men's Open fours.

But 12 teams have hit the required number in a more special way — with six straight wins.

Those skips already into tomorrow's post section rounds are: Bruce Phillips (Tower), Dan Dickison (Tauranga), Jeremy Brosnan (Glen Eden), Aiden Takarua (Pt Chevalier), Garry Murfitt (West End), John Gray (Fitzroy), Raymond Martin (Victoria), Anton Ferrari (Naenae), Mike Cavanagh (Pukekohe), Kelly Hill (New Plymouth), Darren Goodin (Paritutu) and Taylor Horn (Mangere).

In addition there are 19 sides with five wins and 31 on four. That means even if all of today's play is washed out — which is most unlikely — the total number of qualifiers would still be below 65.

"That means that only six post section rounds will be needed to find the winner," Robert Wolfe of the tournament committee said.

"Had there been 65 or more qualifiers, then the final would have been on Monday."

Horn skips the same side as he has in the previous two seasons. It includes Ben Brophy and the Kapes, father and son — Ken and Hamish.

They just missed qualifying in 2019 and were knocked out in the second round of post section last time.

And while they have not had things all their own way during the first three days, they have found a way to win each time.

The win in the morning round yesterday came 24-20 at the expense of Kevin Smith (Hinuera), and after lunch, No 6 was achieved 27-10 over Iain Opray (Hutt). Smith needs both games today to qualify, but Opray's hopes are now dashed.

Horn is currently on the fringe of the national squad, having earlier in the season won the New Zealand under-26 singles. He claimed the Dominion singles in 2019.

Kape junior is also on the rise, having claimed his second Taranaki title when he skipped the winning team in the champion-of-champions triples last October.

With that sort of talent, the side could go deep into this year's Open.

But as to bowls, so much will depend, amongst other factors, on the luck of the draw.

## Paritutu again gets the nod to host finals

The finals of the 116th Open tournament will be held at Paritutu again. Paritutu also hosted the finals in 2020 while West End was the location in 2019.

The main criteria for choosing the club for the finals is the one with the best two greens.

"In reality we would be more

than happy to use Paritutu, West End or Vogeltown — such is the quality of all three," Grant Hassall said.

"We are very fortunate on that count because there have been years — my mind turns back to the mid 1990s — when that same luxury was not so."

However, a decision had to be

made and Paritutu has received the nod.

Providing the number of qualifiers in the fours do not exceed 44, then only two greens will be required for post section tomorrow — both at Paritutu.

Last year there were 41 teams that qualified.

## Brown's plea does not fall on deaf ears

At the official opening on Monday morning, New Plymouth District Councillor Gordon Brown, who was filling in for an otherwise engaged Mayor Neil Holdom, wished all players the best of luck for the week.

That came with his duty of officially opening the tournament.

But just prior to that, with a typical Brown quip — the trademark Taranaki folk have come to expect from the 1994 New Zealand rugby writer of the year — he asked for those teams that were drawn to play against Bill Foley's New Plymouth quartet to go easy on them.

Brown is a member of Foley's side, alongside Frank Gecse and Joe Peel.

The team opened with a 24-22 win over Mark Sarginson (Ohope) on Monday, but were comfortably beaten by Kevin Coombe (Aramoho) in the afternoon.

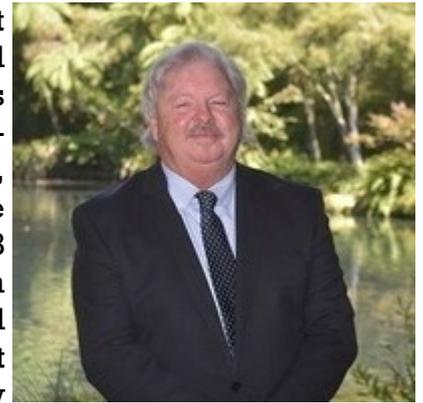
Tuesday was a day to celebrate. The side beat Ian Lowry's Rahotu family 24-22 and they then staged a brilliant fight back to defeat Mort Jones (Hillcrest) 28-23.

The belief that qualifying — and then, who knows — increased further yesterday, with two more wins — 27-18 over Jim Cornish (Omarunui) and 25-3 against Bruce Low (Waimea).

It means that Brown and co have two bites at the cherry today to get through to post section.

The side is drawn to meet Paul Digby (Stratford-Avon) and Roger Sutton (Epsom). Having the mayor open the Open is a long-standing tradition, which in fact had its origins laid well before the first event in 1906.

James Paul was both the mayor of New Plymouth and also the man who introduced bowls to the province.



## Who has won how many after day three?

**Section 1:** six wins, nil; five wins, Steven Brien (Stokes Valley), Peter Doreen (Far North RSA); four wins, Darren Scott (West End), Stefan McCartney (Paritutu), Steve Liddington (Hillcrest).

**Section 2:** six wins, nil; five wins, Bill Foley (New Plymouth); four wins, Mort Jones (Hillcrest), Jim Cornish (Omarunui), Paddy Deegan (Opunake), Ian Lowry (Rahotu), Kevin Coombe (Aramoho).

**Section 3:** six wins, Bruce Phillips (Tower), Dan Dickison (Tauranga); five wins, David Nightingale (Glendowie); four wins, Leon Wech (Mairangi Bay).

**Section 4:** six wins, Jeremy Brosnan (Glen Eden); five wins, Marty Doak (Far North RSA); four wins, Graham Crawford (Paritutu), Ranghi Hiroti (Inglewood), Mark Anderson (Tower), Tony Stoker (Naenae).

**Section 5:** six wins, Aiden Takarua (Pt Chevalier); five wins, Dean Elgar (West End); four wins, Ian Busby (Tower), Jim Corric (Riverhead), Bruce Harris (Johnston Park), Adam Wishnoski (New Lynn), Gary Russek (Omokoroa).

**Section 6:** six wins, Garry Murfitt (West End); five wins, Neville Hill (Royal Oak), Paul Matheson (Halswell); four wins, John Carter (Hutt), Logan

Palmer (Wanganui).

**Section 7:** six wins, John Gray (Fitzroy), Raymond Martin (Victoria); five wins, Nelson West (Inglewood), Warwick Fredrickson (Blockhouse Bay), Teo Turua (Royal Oak); four wins, Allan Bridgeman (Oakura).

**Section 8:** six wins, Anton Ferrari (Naenae); five wins, Ian Mahoney (Central Levin), Brian Little (Palmerston North); four wins, Jim Priest (Oakura), Barry Wakely (Omarunui), Bruce Mummery (Paritutu).

**Section 9:** six wins, Mike Cavanagh (Pukekohe); five wins, David Hood (Whangarei), Andrew Bowden (Parklands); four wins, Craig De Faria (West End).

**Section 10:** six wins, Kelly Hill (New Plymouth); five wins, Ray Park (Wanganui); four wins, Gerry O'Sullivan (Inglewood), Wayne Ruka (Pringle Park), Malcolm Moore (Hillcrest).

**Section 11:** six wins, Darren Goodin (Paritutu); five wins, Nigel Drew (Birkenhead), Paul Hassall (Tawa), Peter Belliss (Aramoho); four wins, nil.

**Section 12:** six wins, Taylor Horn (Mangere); five wins, nil; four wins, Mark Hartland (Pukekohe), Peter Charteris (Rahotu), Kevin Smith (Hinuera).



## Big guns still odds-on to qualify on five wins

Among the big names sitting on five wins are Peter Belliss (Aramoho), Brian Little (Palmerston North) and Dan Delany (Royal Oak). They remain odds-on to qualify.

All three teams won twice on day three to be handily placed.

Belliss defeated Ron Gadsby (Fitzroy) 27-16 and Brian Cooper (Levin) 27-23; Little's victories were over Moe Kelly (Fitzroy) 26-10 and Tupu Campbell (Far North RSA) 26-16; while Delany beat Kearin Pollard (Hawera Park) 30-17 and Murray Wood (Kapiti) 24-21

Elsewhere, a number of good sides suffered set backs, with some of the results spelling the end of hopes in 2021.

Adam Wishnoski (New Lynn) suffered his second loss in the morning, falling 27-17 to Bruce Harris (Johnston Park) but came through the afternoon game to remain a chance.

In the same section, Dean Elgar (West End) lost his unbeaten record to Sandy Robinson (Omarunui) 29-27 but was a resounding victor in the afternoon. Elgar has five wins.

Craig De Faria (West End) also needs both games today. De Faria lost 25-19 to Andrew Bowden (Parklands, Christchurch) in the afternoon and needs to get past both Richard Death (Te Awamutu) and Cary Pinker (Wanganui East) on his home green. Death and Pinker have 50% records.

Ray Park (Wanganui) was edged 22-21 by Kevin Hills (Tower) in the morning game, but secured win number five in the afternoon. That was only just, though, 25-23 against Rex Holmes (Paraparaumu Beach), after the scores had been even playing the 25th head.

The loss summed up Holmes' day. His side had earlier lost 23-22 to Malcolm Moore (Hillcrest), meaning there is no chance of qualifying.

But in the same section Gerry O'Sullivan's Inglewood side — with sister Maree in town again to manage the family for the week — posted two wins. They need a repeat today to qualify.

There were a few anxious moments in the afternoon win, with O'Sullivan claiming singles on the last two ends to win 19-18 against Ron Crimlis (Papamoa).

Bart Robertson (Hikurangi) lost both games to bow out.

Neville Hill (Royal Oak) and Paul Matheson (Halswell) both won twice to sit on five wins, but John Carter lost twice and needs both today in the tough sixth section.

\* A heavy downpour just after 6pm last night, which included hail, flooded greens across the city and left four games spread over the Paritutu, West End and Vogeltown clubs incomplete — and some on a knife edge. Those games will be finalised prior to 9am today.

\* In a repeat of the decision made on Tuesday, organisers have again decided to transfer the section that was due to play at Stratford-Avon today to the Paritutu C green. "We have heard the comments of some players and their disappointment of not being able to play on the immaculate Stratford-Avon green. However, these are countered by the previously discussed variable weather and traffic delays. We have time pressures on Thursday evening in doing the draws, and so on the balance, it was decided to make the change," Grant Hassall said.



**Tauranga's Lance Tasker on his way to win No 6 yesterday playing for Dan Dickison. Paritutu's Neil Watson looks on.**

## Neville Elliott missed and remembered

There is a familiar face missing from this year's Taranaki men's Open fours – Neville Elliott.

Elliott served on the Taranaki executive and board for 25 years, holding various roles, including president, chairman and executive officer. But after a long battle with illness, Elliott passed away in November.

“He was a brilliant man for bowls,” said current Taranaki president Ian Andrews, who dealt with Elliott both as a teammate and a fellow administrator.

“He could come across as a little strong headed, but every decision that he made in bowls was with the intention of what was in the best interests of the sport.”

Elliott retired as executive officer in May 2019, but the life member still continued to work – including on the 2020 Open.

Elliott was in the chart room, moving around the greens and talking to the many people he had come into contact with.

Elliott has in fact even contributed to this year's event, too. He schooled up new executive officer, Tina Atkinson-Watt, and had arranged various items, such as posters and trophies.

His computerised diary system, which he had based off the manual system implemented by

the previous executive officer, Brien Bennett QSM, remains a hugely valuable item.

“There is no doubt that Neville was great for bowls and the Open, but the same also applied in reverse; bowls and the Open brought a lot of enjoyment to his life.”

Even when he was told that his condition was terminal, Elliott was still working on ways to make Taranaki bowls successful. “That was the true mark of the man; it wasn't about his ego, it was about something he loved — exemplary.”

The warmth in which Elliott was held was evident by the strong number of bowlers that attended his funeral, which included Open visitors from outside the province.

“While Neville was quite comfortable addressing a crowd, he didn't seek the limelight. But based off the number of times Neville's name has come up this week, he certainly is missed by a number of people.”

In addition to being an outstanding administrator, Elliott was also a proficient competitor. He won a gold star and in total collected seven Taranaki titles.

And while he didn't compete in the Open that often — for obvious reasons — he did make the semifinals in 2013, as a member of John Reid's team.



**Neville Elliott hard at work during the 2019 Open.**

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