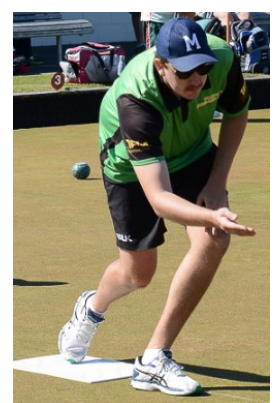


# SHOWCASING YOUTH BOWLS 2022

The showcase event of youth bowls in New Zealand is the Living House Burnside Under 26 Singles tournament. Thirty-two players aged between 13 and 25 will compete for the title at the Burnside Bowling Club on Avonhead Road, Christchurch, from Friday, 7 October to Sunday, 9 October.

The field will be drawn into four sections, with each player having seven section games. The top two players in each section are then placed in Division 1, the next two in Division 2, and so on for Divisions 3 and 4. Four games of 21 shots up are played on both Friday and Saturday, while the semi-finals and finals of each division will be decided on Sunday morning, 9 October starting at 9-00am. There will be strong competition to be in Division 1, as the overall winner will come from there.

Three previous winners are back for another tilt at the title and all three are strong contenders. Seamus Curtin (Stokes Valley, Wellington) aged 22, first played in this event in 2015 as a 15-year-old and was the winner in 2018. Seamus is already a capped Blackjack and holder of New Zealand titles (photo below left). Taylor Horn (Cambridge Central) won this event in 2020. The previous year, Taylor won the National Men's Singles Championship. Now 25 years of age, this is his final year in this event (photo below right). Anthony Ouellet (Bowls Tauranga South) was last year's worthy winner. Anthony is now 21 years of age and enjoys great bowling success in the Bay of Plenty (photo middle).



A first for this event is the entry of two players direct from the Cook Islands. Emily Jim (Rakahanga Bowling Club), aged 22, represented the Cook Islands in both the

2018 and 2022 Commonwealth Games. Royden Aperau (Mangaia Bowling Club), aged 19, represented the Cook Islands at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and, in 2021, won the Cook Islands Singles, Pairs and Triples Championships. These two players will be accompanied to New Zealand by the President of Cook Islands Bowls, Unakea Kauvai. Two other Cook Islands international representatives are also in the field. Adoni Wichman-Rairoa (Club Merrylands, Australia), aged 21, played in the 2018 Commonwealth Games, while twenty-three-year-old Aidan Zittersteijn (Paritutu, New Plymouth) won a bronze medal for the Cook Islands in the Pairs at the 2018 Commonwealth Games and also played in the 2022 Games for his country. Aidan has always played very well in his visits to Christchurch. The international experiences of these four young players will stand them in good stead at Burnside.

A feature of this field is the number of representative players taking part. This can result in some very close games and “upsets” are quite common. Some names to look out for, however, are:

Ashleigh Jeffcoat (Carlton Cornwall, Auckland), aged 23, is a current member of the wider Blackjack squad. Jonty Horwell (Kaikorai, Dunedin), aged 23, recently played in the winning South Island team in the Bowls NZ North V South event in Dunedin. Aiden Takarua (Port Chevalier, Auckland) is another 23-year-old who has often featured on TV playing exciting shots while skipping his club team in the Bowls3Five League. Adam Baillie (Point Chevalier, Auckland), aged 20, was runner up to Taylor Horn in 2020 but could not travel down to play last year because of Covid-19 restrictions. In 2019, Adam won the Deaf Lawn Bowls NZ Men’s Singles Championship. Hamish Kelleher (Cobden, Greymouth) is a talented West Coast 17-year-old bowler.

Among the 20 North Islanders, there are three well-performed newcomers from Auckland playing for the first time in this tournament. Liam Hill (Ellerslie), aged 13, is the youngest player in the field, while David Motu (Onehunga and Districts), aged 15 and Adam Blucher (Te Atatu Peninsula), aged 17, are players with some already impressive results.

Local interest will settle on the four Christchurch players. Sixteen-year-old Jack Bonner (Barrington) was named the Bowls Canterbury Young Player of the Year in the 2021-22 season, while Woolston Park’s Dylan Campbell, aged 19, Cashmere’s Braeden Casware, aged 19, and Burnside’s 16-year-old Callum Cox will be well-supported by their families, friends and club mates.

It's worth noting that four of the five players in the successful New Zealand women's lawn bowls team at the recent 2022 Commonwealth Games were aged 28 years or less. Between them, the team won bronze medals in the Women's Pairs, Triples and Fours. Katelyn Inch, Selina Goddard, Nicole Toomey and Tayla Bruce were all habitual participants in this annual event, regularly achieving places in Division 1. This Under 26 Singles tournament has been an important stepping stone in the pathway to their international careers. Tayla, in fact, won the 2015 event as a 20-year-old and this year she has been appointed by the Burnside Club to the position of Tournament Director.

Tournament Convenor, Kerrie Bruce is delighted with the quality of the field, the enthusiasm of the volunteers, the readiness and quality of the greens, and has her fingers crossed for kind weather. She is looking forward to welcoming the players, their supporters, and many spectators.

Spectators are welcome at Burnside Bowling Club at 330 Avonhead Road in Christchurch; entry is free. Bowls New Zealand will be live streaming games on Saturday and Sunday on its YouTube channel. Full tournament details including players' names, draws and results can be found at <https://www.burnsidebowlingclub.com/2022-under-26-singles.html>