

## Worthy Winner Bowls the Field in the Living House Burnside Under 26 Singles 2022



After 140 games, played over three days, (7-9 October), Cambridge Central's 25 year old Taylor Horn emerged from the field as a very worthy and second time winner of the Living House Burnside under 26 Singles.

**The Finalists; Seamus Curtin (Stokes Valley), and Taylor Horn (Cambridge Central) with Taia Bruce (Tournament Director and 2015 winner)**

Horn's opponent in the 2022 final was Stokes Valley's and New Zealand Blackjack, Seamus Curtin, who was also seeking his second victory in this event. The pair traded singles in the first six ends but Horn went on a golden run to score 12 answered points over the next six ends. Curtin then rallied to dominate the following five ends to bring the score back to 11-15 in Horn's favour. Curtin's drive on the 18<sup>th</sup> end narrowly missed the jack and resulted in four shots to Horn and a 19-11 lead. Some great bowls were played in the last four ends with Horn scoring the necessary 21<sup>st</sup> point on the 22<sup>nd</sup> end of an entertaining and high class contest.

Horn, a self employed painter and decorator, and Curtin, a second year student of psychology and education at Victoria University of Wellington, both rate this event highly in that they are with their peers and regard it as a great kick start to their respective seasons. The last time these two played each other was at Burnside in January in the semi-final of the National Pairs Championship. Curtin with Andrew Kelly won that game and went on to win the final and the National title.

The 32 players were drawn into four sections each of eight players. After seven games the top two from each section advanced to Division 1, the next two to Division 2 and so on. Knockout quarter finals, semi finals and the final were then played in each Division.

On the first day, Friday, the 32 players and event officials suffered what felt like Antarctic type conditions. Only three players remained unbeaten at the end of the day; Aiden Takarua (Point Chevalier), Alex Cross (Northend/Riversdale, Southland) and David Motu (Onehunga & Districts), all won their four games.

Day 2, Saturday, was far more pleasant with mild temperatures and kinder winds. Only 15 year old, Year 11 pupil at TKKM o Hoani Waititi School, David Motu, survived section play unbeaten. A feature of section play was the number of close games with several being won 21-20. The quarter finals of each Division were then played. In Division 1, Liam Hill, a 13 year old, Year 9 pupil at Auckland's Selwyn College defeated his good friend David Motu; Taylor Horn d Anthony Ouellet, (Tauranga) the 2021 winner; Nathan Goodin (Rahotu) d Kasey Garforth (Rewa); and Seamus Curtin d Aiden Takarua. Sunday, finals' day, was perfect for bowls. Clear blue skies, warm temperatures and a gentle breeze. The semi finals and finals of each Division were decided on a true and well paced Burnside Bowling Club green. Taylor Horn's semi final with Liam Hill enthralled the spectators before Horn closed it out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> end 21-18. Seamus Curtin won well from Nathan Goodwin to seal his berth in the final.

Although North Island players dominated Division 1 it was a case of what might have been for some of the South Island's best. Alex Cross missed out on Division 1 on a count back; Tom Taiaroa (West End, Timaru) won 5 section games and lost the other two 20-21 to the eventual top two in his section; seventeen year old Hamish Kelleher (Cobden, Greymouth) played very well in a talented

section and went on to win the strong Division 2 from Cook Islands international, Adoni Wichman-Rairoa who lives in Australia and plays at Club Merrylands, NSW.

The best of the young women players was Ashleigh Jeffcoat (Carlton Cornwall) who was second in Division 3 to Adam Baillie (Point Chevalier). Adam was overall runner up to Taylor Horn in the 2020 event. The most successful of the Christchurch players was Woolston Park's Dylan Campbell who deserved his place in Division 3.

The Cook Islands' contingent added flair and real interest to the tournament with two players achieving places in Division 2. They all played well in unfamiliar conditions and they are keen to return to next year's event.

Bowls NZ recognised the value of this tournament to the future development of the sport of lawn bowls in New Zealand. The President of Bowls NZ, Ann Wright, Bowls NZ's Lead Coach, Mike Kernaghan and Bowls NZ's Coach Trainer, Graeme Rees, were engrossed spectators and participants while several games were live streamed by Bowls NZ staff. The President of Cook Islands Bowls, Unakea Kauvai was also a welcome visitor.

Only three of the 2022 field, including Taylor Horn, will be ineligible because of age to play in the 2023 Under 26 event. Seamus Curtin has three more years; new players Liam Hill and David Motu have 12 years and 10 more years respectively. The beauty of this tournament is that the field keeps refreshing itself with new talent and brings to the fore names that will become future Blackjacks like Doug Wilson, Shannon McIlroy, Chris Le Lievre, Andrew Kelly, Amy McIlroy, Tayla Bruce, Katelyn Inch, Sheldon Bagrie-Howley, Seamus Curtin, Selina Goddard and Nicole Toomey. This tournament has indeed been an important pathway in these players' journeys to international status.

## **Results Summary**

### **2022 Living House Burnside Under 26 Singles**

#### **Division One**

Taylor Horn (Cambridge Central) d Seamus Curtin (Stokes Valley): 21-14

#### **Division Two**

Hamish Kelleher (Cobden) d Adoni Wichman-Rairoa (Club Merrylands): 21-3

#### **Division Three**

Adam Baillie (Point Chevalier) d Ashleigh Jeffcoat (Carlton Cornwall): 15-4

#### **Division Four**

Mitchell Scott (Kaikorai) d James Thomson (Rewa): 15-7

Full tournament details including players' names, draws and results can be found at <https://www.burnsidebowlingclub.com/2022-under-26-singles.html>