

NZ four guilty of throwing end

Kevin Tutty
BOWLS

THE Gary Lawson-skipped New Zealand four has been found guilty of throwing a game at the Asia Pacific bowls championships in Malaysia last August.

The 13-page verdict was delivered to the players and their lawyers yesterday by an independent panel that heard the charge over two days last month. The panel was chaired by Christchurch judge, John Bishop.

The four bowlers – Lawson, Shayne Sincock, Shannon McIlroy and Jamie Hill – will hear their penalty in 10 days from Bowls New Zealand.

The panel found the players guilty of losing the 17th end of a pool game against Thailand when they

dropped four shots to go from a 15-12 lead to trail 15-16. The judgment said the players then tried to retrieve the situation on the final end but lost 17-15.

New Zealand's loss allowed Thailand into the playoffs and eliminated Canada from the medal chase.

Canada protested but Lawson maintained the Canadians had only themselves to blame because they had lost to Thailand in a crucial game earlier in the day.

The protest was taken to World Bowls, which ran the tournament, and World Bowls asked Bowls New Zealand to investigate the allegations. The hearing resulted from those investigations.

Lawson said last night that he was not too "stressed" about the the



Gary Lawson: "I would like to think if [the penalty] won't be too harsh."

verdict and would wait until the penalty is announced before deciding whether to appeal.

"If the penalty is not too bad I don't think it will matter about appealing. At this stage I think we will just sit back and see what happens. "I would like to think it [the pen-

alty] won't be too harsh. I think we have already served a big enough penalty.

"It's gone way beyond where it should have. The Canadians never wanted their protest to go this far," Lawson said. "They admitted that to our lawyers."

"They had a problem with the way we played the 17th end but they never wanted it to go this far. Most people can read between the lines that it's not about Canada and us."

Bowls NZ will make a submission on the penalty and the players' lawyers will put in a submission.

"It will probably say we believe we've been penalised enough already," Lawson said.

"They've found us guilty of throwing the 17th end. What's the punishment to fit that crime?"

Lawson said he felt sorry for the other three members of the squad.

Sincock, from Christchurch, who was a newcomer to international bowls, after several years of performing soundly at national championships and for Canterbury provincial teams, was stunned by the verdict.

"All our chances of being selected for New Zealand teams have gone. It's pretty disappointing what's happened."

Sincock said it was a continuing saga having to wait another 10 days for a sentence.

"This thing happened five months ago. I don't know where they [Bowls New Zealand] were coming from actually."

"I thought the coach, and the CEO were part of the team and

should be supporting it."

He said it had been a stressful time for him since the charge was laid.

"It's always on your mind when you're playing bowls, but we've still been trying our hardest," said Sincock, who has just returned from the national championships in Wellington.

Lawson first represented New Zealand in 1989 and has been the sports most consistent bowler for the past 20 years.

In 2008, at the world championships in Christchurch, he skipped the pairs and took to gold medals.

Last week he won his 10th national championship title, equaling the record of former New Zealand player, the late Nick Unkovich.

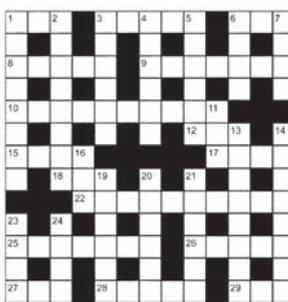
The Press



Preparing for action: Britain's Richard Jeens concentrates on the task ahead during yesterday's international match against New Zealand at Trentham. Although Britain took the honours, shattering the world record, the Kiwis will have plenty of time to set the record straight with the prestigious Ballinger Belt championships scheduled for the rest of the week. Photos: ANDREW GORRIE

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Wages
 - 3 Roost
 - 6 Expert
 - 8 Distribute
 - 9 Spliced
 - 10 Quench
 - 12 Blubber
 - 15 Loosen
 - 17 Spout
 - 18 Moose
 - 22 Tiny
 - 25 Sentimental
 - 26 Hail
 - 27 Belly
 - 28 Comeback
 - 29 Star
- DOWN**
- 1 Amicable
 - 2 Christmas
 - 3 Intoxicating
 - 4 Hearsay
 - 5 Badger
 - 6 Dry
 - 7 Whirlpool
 - 11 Porker
 - 13 Commerce
 - 14 Menace
 - 16 Aged
 - 19 Executioner
 - 20 Abduct
 - 21 Ravenous
 - 23 Complacent
 - 24 Bosom



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Man, 3 Dee, 5 Life, 8 Boats, 9 Payment, 10 Trilog, 12 Wogan, 13 Ria, 15 Bogy, 17 Tog, 19 Janet, 20 Pyramid, 23 Harbour, 24 Terry, 25 Leah, 26 And, 27 Hip, DOWN: 1 Mobster, 2 Naafi, 3 Disco, 4 Empty, 5 Lay away, 6 Freight, 7 Eton, 11 Ooo, 14 Aintree, 15 Betroth, 16 Guy, 18 Giddy-up, 19 John, 20 Parka, 21 Rated, 22 Marsh.

■ The answers to today's crossword are available on The Dominion Post website: www.dompst.co.nz/crossword

Britain off to flying start with record victory over Kiwis

Sam Worthington
SHOOTING

THEY came, they saw and they conquered. Britain's red-hot rifle team not only defeated New Zealand in an international match at Trentham yesterday, they also believe they shattered a world record.

The crack Britain team, in town as part of the Ballinger Belt national championships, shot a remarkable score of 1989 out of a possible 2000 points over four ranges (300, 600, 900 and 1000 yards).

"It had shooting folk reaching for their record books and delighted Britain captain Gary Alexander was in no doubt it had set a new benchmark.

"It's a record for the New Zealand match and it's also a record for this course of fire anywhere in the world," Alexander said.

"The New Zealanders shot an admirable 1988 but were left in the visitors' wake."

"The New Zealand team shot very well and on a different day they might have won but everything clicked for us today," Alexander said.

"All the work and effort and the two years of preparation and planning has paid dividends."

Alexander, who has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at this year's Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, said no stone had been left unturned in a highly professional preparation.

"For the last 25 years Great Britain have not managed to win the New Zealand match."

"We came over here this year with a very serious team, a lot of them are world champions."

"You have to, to beat New Zealand in New Zealand, they're one of the best in the world."

"To beat New Zealand on their home range is very special."



On target: New Zealand's Mike Collings looks ready for business during the first round of competition at Trentham yesterday.

Alexander was appointed captain of the team two years ago, and helped oversee a painstaking selection and training process.

"A performance like today doesn't just come from shooting well, the team has to really click."

"In order to get to this stage, we've looked at everything from the preparation of the ammunition and the equipment that we have, through to training in our teams," Alexander said.

Trentham's notoriously tricky winds stayed away for the majority of yesterday's contest, which aided the high scores.

New Zealand and Britain lock horns again in a Mini Palma Match on Sunday but first turn their attentions to the prestigious Ballinger Belt, which ends on Saturday.

Alexander will be a strong contender, as will his team-mates, including Queen's Prize winner Jon Underwood and another Northern Ireland representative Ross McQuillan.

"There's quite a few people that have come here hoping to not only do well as a team," Alexander said.

"It's one of the top trophies that any

AT A GLANCE

- **What:** Shooting, Ballinger Belt national championships
- **Where:** Seddon Rifle Range in Trentham
- **Today:** Masfield Shorts, Masfield Longs
- **Tomorrow:** Ballinger Belt Qualifying Series
- **Thursday:** Ballinger Belt Qualifying Series
- **Friday:** Regional Teams, Ballinger Belt Qualifying Series
- **Saturday:** Champion Club Teams, Schools and Cadet Teams, F and FTR Class Final, Queens Final
- **Sunday:** Mini Palma Match - NZ v Great Britain, ICFRA Targets

shooter in the world can win, the Ballinger Belt."

New Zealand captain Tony Loughnan could only applaud his high calibre opposition.

"They were just brilliant," he said.

"The score we've shot today, most years you'd be pretty happy with it so we can't complain about that."

"They're the best in the world and it gives us a benchmark to measure ourselves against."

"We've come up a bit short of their level but we know what we've got to do."

Loughnan said the Ballinger Belt series was the one of the first steps as the New Zealand team builds towards next year's world championships in Brisbane.

Meanwhile, the South Island defeated the North Island in their annual match, shooting 1942 points out of a possible 2000. The North Island, winners last year, shot 1917.

Big blow for open as injury forces Nalbandian to quit

David Long
TENNIS

THE Heineken Open suffered a huge blow last night when the tournament's biggest drawcard, David Nalbandian, was forced to pull out.

The former top 10 player picked up a light abdominal strain when training in Auckland yesterday and after receiving an MRI scan at Auckland Hospital he made the decision to withdraw.

Nalbandian was on the comeback trail from a hip operation that has sidelined him since May. This was to be his first tournament since then and it is likely that he will miss next week's Australian Open.

Nalbandian's exit is a crushing blow to tournament organisers, who have struggled to bring in any big names for this year's event with Nalbandian the only player in the field with genuine superstar status.

Tournament director Richard Palmer said it was disappointing to lose a player of Nalbandian's stature from the tournament.

"These things happen and it's sad that it's happened," Palmer said last night. "It would have been great to have seen him play but what can you do about it?"

"Coming back from injury and off for a little while is always fraught with risk, so while he was a significant drawcard there are plenty of other good players there."

"I've been doing this for 14 years, he's not the first one and, if I carry on, he won't be the last."

Nalbandian said he was also disap-



David Nalbandian: Suffered abdominal strain during training.

pointed to have missed out on playing at the open.

"I am very disappointed not to be able to make my comeback this week at the Heineken Open," he said. "I was very much looking forward to playing in Auckland once again."

"I didn't play much tennis for eight months so it is natural to suffer some small injuries. Although I am disappointed at the moment, I remain confident and positive about making a full-time comeback to the tour soon."

"I thank tournament director Richard Palmer for giving me the wild card and the opportunity to resume my career and I hope to come back next year and play in front of the Kiwi crowd."

Nalbandian's place in the main draw goes to Spaniard Inigo Cervantes-Huegen, who gets in as the lucky loser as his name was drawn out of the hat from the four players who lost in the last round of qualifying.

Statham wins battle of Kiwis
C8

Confess all, Tiger's coach tells No 1 golfer

GOLF

TIGER WOODS' former coach, Butch Harmon, believes the world No 1 must risk the humiliation and embarrassment of a full and frank news conference over his infidelities before he can get on with his life.

Woods, who is taking an indefinite break from golf, has been in hiding since admitting last month he had cheated on his wife.

"The golfing public would like to see Tiger Woods do a press conference. To stand there in front of everybody, take his medicine, be humble, be embarrassed, be humiliated and answer the questions."

"But where the hell is he? We could find Osama bin Laden easier than we can find Tiger Woods. How long can you spend on a yacht in the middle of the ocean?"

Harmon, who now coaches world No 2 Phil Mickelson, said the 14-times major champion would have to put up with verbal asides from the crowds when he returns to golf. "He is going to get it. If he plays in the Ryder Cup in Wales in October which I happen to think he will, that is going to be very interesting." Reuters

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