

Fine comeback by Rodgers seals Bay win

Twenty-one-year-old Anne Rodgers, from Tauranga, staged her second comeback in two days to clinch the provincial women's golf championship for her team at St Andrew's yesterday.

One down with two to play against Rachel Slee, of Taranaki, she won the last two holes to give Bay of Plenty-Thames Valley a 4-1 victory.

And in the final accounting, Bay took the title from Wellington by just half a game.

The contest was thrown wide open when Canterbury, who had only to win their match against Manawatu-Wanganui to take the Bank of New Zealand Trophy, collapsed to lose, 3½-1½.

Square

That left Bay of Plenty and Wellington needing to win their ties, with the title going to the one with the biggest margin.

After nine holes the Bay were narrowly up in three games and square in the other two against Taranaki.

But young Kellie Matthews, at number five, had been shaken by a disastrous six on a par-three and gradually succumbed, to give Debbie McCallum her first win of the tournament.

At the top of the order Brenda Ormsby wrapped up her game 5 and 4. Jane Little, at two, won on the 17th and the super-consistent Annette Almond came home two up.

But the Bay supporters knew that Wellington had at least a 3-2 margin in prospect against Auckland and Rodgers' game became vital.

On Thursday she had won the last three holes for a half. This time she fought back with two wins for victory.

Tussle

Wellington were still in with a chance of sharing the title. Annette Stott had secured one win for Auckland but Wellington were comfortably home in the bottom two matches.

Lisa Aldridge was three up on Jan Higgins at the top of the order and Lyn

From **BOB PEARCE**
in Hamilton



Lyn Brooky



Brenda Ormsby

Brooky and Marnie McGuire were having a tremendous tussle.

When McGuire failed to get down in two from the fringe at the 16th, Brooky drew level and Wellington were in contention for the title.

But it was Brooky who needed the saving putt on the 17th and pars there and at the 18th were enough for McGuire to hold on for a half.

With Aldridge beating Higgins 2 up Wellington had won 3½-1½ — just half a game short of the Bay in the final reckoning.

Perhaps the clinching factor in the Bay success was the return of Ormsby at number one after a break of four years. She was in the last winning Bay team, in 1987, and five more before that.

"I was really impressed by the improvement in standard over the past four years," she said. "There is some very good golf being played."

Behind Ormsby in the order Jane Little could call on even more experience. She played her first tournament at Paraparaumu in 1959 and that was in a winning Bay team.

But the rock on which the team built was the slight

figure of Whakatane golfer Annette Almond. She dropped from number one this year to number three and recorded five wins and a half from six games.

Rodgers had four wins and a half at four and Matthews, a youngster from Coromandel, had two vital wins.

Brittle

And it would be wrong to omit mention of their captain, Betty Cameron, who can take credit for rebuilding the Bay team.

Wellington's chances were damaged early in the piece when they lost to Waikato-King Country, but both Aldridge and Brooky

showed good form for much of the tournament.

Canterbury proved surprisingly brittle. Kerry Starr, with only a half to blemish her winning record, looked every inch an international and Dianne Woodhouse managed a similar record.

But Liz Douglas was far from her best at number one — she began yesterday's vital tie by carving her first tee shot on to the roof of a house.

Auckland finished fifth. McGuire had one back round, Stott had two and Higgins was not quite at her peak at number one. All that would not have mattered too much if the newcomers, Rae Riggir and Pam Sowden, had chimed in consistently.

Perfect

Waikato had similar problems. Jan Oliver lost only one match, to Shelley Duncan of Otago, and Jan Malcolm had five wins and a half but the others were less consistent.

Nobody in the tournament had six wins. Perhaps the closest was the Northland number two, Emma Keeling, who lost her perfect record yesterday when Louise Sanko of Hawke Bay holed a long birdie putt on the last to halve their match.

The 17-year-old from Kerikeri has now played two of these tournaments for 11 wins and a half.

The New Zealand team of Higgins, Aldridge and McGuire fly out today for South Korea where they will defend the Queen Sirikit Trophy New Zealand won last year.