

Fowler keeps tournament's top guns well and truly at bay

By RUSSELL GRAY

BAY OF PLENTY'S Renee Fowler has been the scourge of the big name players on the first two days of the interprovincial women's golf championships.

On Tuesday, Fowler beat Manawatu's international Susan Farron, and yesterday added the scalps of Wellington's Lynnette Brooky and Canterbury's Kerryn Starr to her collection.

Those wins helped Bay of Plenty-Thames Valley to a 3½-1½ morning win over Wellington and a 3-2 success against previously unbeaten Canterbury in the afternoon, keeping them in contention for the title at the ANZ-sponsored tournament.

The New Zealand selectors might now be rueing the decision to announce before the tournament began those who will trial at Heretaunga later this month for places in teams to compete at the New South Wales championship and the Espirito Santo world teams' event.

Fowler wasn't one of those selected.

However, the manner in which she performed against the experienced Brooky and Starr marked her down as an international of the future. Both matches went to the 18th green before Fowler won one up and no-one could have blamed her had she lost her composure, particularly against Starr.

Five down early in the match, Starr roared back with a vengeance with four consecutive birdies to get within one hole of Fowler with four to play. The next three holes



SUSAN FARRON

were halved before the pair produced a fitting finale to a magnificent match.

On the last hole, a par five, Starr put her third shot to within four feet of the hole from 90 metres but Fowler responded to the challenge by landing her short iron from the rough 70 metres away three feet from the pin. Both players rolled in their birdie putts to end on a high note.

Manawatu-Wanganui lead the competition with six points and 11½ individual matches, but they still have the bye to come and the true leaders are Auckland on six points and 9½ matches.

Auckland are the only team with a 100 per cent record after beating Manawatu 3-2 in the afternoon. Earlier they had scraped home against Waikato-King Country earlier by the same score.

Going into the tournament Auckland No 1 Annette Stott

made much of the team aspect and over the past two days it has been easy to see why.

Reserve Kylie Wilson took over at No 3 when Joanna Crokery was laid low by a kidney infection for the first two rounds and won one of her matches.

Against Waikato-King Country, Stott was the saviour fighting back from two down with seven to play to beat Queen Sirikit Cup representative Gina Scott one up.

Stott and No 2 Pam Sowden were beaten by Farron and Lisa Aldridge respectively against Manawatu. Crokery, playing her first match, and Emma Keeling had easy wins at three and four, leaving the match to be decided by the number fives.

Auckland's Rae Riggir had lost her first two matches but produced the goods at the right time to beat Judy Columb two and one to give her side the win.

Hawke's Bay, who did so well on their home course 12 months ago, are showing that effort was no fluke. They beat Southland 3-2 in the morning and halved their match with South Canterbury after lunch to be on five points and within reach of the lead.

Wellington's dismal run continued when they were beaten by Bay of Plenty, but a 3½-1½ win over Otago gave them their first points.

No 5 Anna Napier beat Otago's Suzanne Ewing one up to extend her record to three wins from four matches, and No 4 Beth Stafford - like Napier making her debut - got on the board with a half against Dawn Dowling.

□ **Enviable record, p21**



LYNETTE BROOKY ... another one of Fowler's victims

Photo: ROSS WEARING