

NZ Maori tennis championships

Traditionally, the New Zealand Maori tennis championships place a greater emphasis on a get-together of kindred souls atmosphere than on pure competitiveness in a very individualistic sport.

The Rothmans sponsored tournament at Auckland just before the end of 1982 was no exception. Indeed while there was a keen edge to the competition, it was confined to the courts and the "minor incident" of the tournament only served to underline the goodwill aspects of the championships.

Overriding everything for the 1982 championships was the return of one of New Zealand's tennis greats, Ruia Morrison Davy to the tournament.

"It gave the event, a star which everyone in New Zealand knew of," said immediate past president of the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Association, Mr Jim Aitkenhead.

Certainly it brought to the tournament a record entry and supporters who wanted to see the former New Zealand champion in action again, even at the age of 46.

Not unexpectedly, Mrs Morrison playing her first tournament tennis for 12 years conserved her energy as much as possible and went out to enjoy her tennis.

Yet the winner of six national singles titles reached the semifinals before bowing out to the 1981 runner-up who again occupied that position at this tournament, Arona Ngatai.

Mrs Morrison has said she will play again in the next championship. The younger players had better look out, Mrs Morrison should be fitter and more match hardened by then.

The presence of the New Zealand Federation Cup No 1, Linda Stewart (Auckland) enhanced the tournament also and in winning the women's title showed why she occupied the premier spot in the women's equivalent of the Davis Cup.

Her volleying and service was a cut above anything produced by other players. The 19-year-old added the mixed doubles titles to her collection, winning with Wayne Gray, and the women's doubles champion, combining with Tilly Witeri.

The minor incident in any other tournament, especially of a national nature as the Maori event was, would have caused all sorts of trouble.

But in the context of the Maori Championships, it was a problem which had to be resolved and everyone ac-

cepted a redraw of the men's open singles at a late stage with all the grace befitting such an event.

Mr Frankie Dennis, the tournament organiser has promised that such incidents will not happen again. It arose perhaps because Mr Dennis was the only tennis administrator present with any great length of experience.

Thrown into the deep end, for a tournament with record entries, Lindsay Wehipeihana from Hamilton and Doug Pai from Auckland just overlooked the necessity of having to allow for byes in the early round to properly advance the right numbers for the quarter-finals and semi-finals in the men's singles.

One or two players who may be disadvantaged through the redraw could have felt strongly about it but instead chose to play as directed with the greatest of sportmanship.

In hind sight, they may have reached a round further while others given the

advantage might have reaped a bonus but the form of former well ranked junior, Wayne Gray (Hutt Valley) was such that there was little doubt that he would be the eventual winner.

Not that it was a poor field. Bob Peni the top seed in the absence of 1981 champion, Barry Smith, was an early favourite.

Former champion Denis Hingston was back from Australia for the men's singles while Bruce Murdoch now coaching and playing in West Germany was another title-holder who returned.

Hingston reached the semifinals where he was beaten by Gray but Murdoch went out in the fourth round ousted by promising Mt Albert player Mike Hetaraka.

Showing the benefits from inter-club play in Auckland's premier Caro Bowl and first grade Unity Shield competitions, the tall Hetaraka beat Peni 4-6, 6-0, 7-5 in the semifinals for a finalist's berth.

1982 New Zealand Maori Tennis Champs Summary of Results

*Seeded player.

Men's Singles — fourth round: *R. Tamaho bt S. Corbett, 4-6, 6-4, 7-5; *M. Hetaraka bt V. Taufa, 6-0, 6-2; S. Thompson bt J. Johnson, 1-6, 6-0, 6-1; W. Sinel bt *M. Billington, 6-4, 6-4. Quarter-finals: R. Pen bt Tamaho, 6-3, 5-7, 7-6; *Hetaraka bt *B. Murdoch, 2-6, 6-1, 7-6; *Hingston bt Thompson, 6-3, 3-6, 6-0; *W. Gray bt Sinel, 6-3, 6-2.

Men's singles: semi-finals: *M. Hetaraka bt *R. Peni, 4-6, 6-0, 7-6; *W. Gray bt *D. Hingston, Jr, 6-1, 6-2. Final: Gray bt Hetaraka, 6-1, 6-4.

Women's singles: — quarter-finals: *L. Stewart bt G. Sanderegger, 6-1, 6-0; T. Maloney bt *F. Laban, 6-2, 6-2; *R. Davy bt *J. Lyden, 6-2, 6-1; *A. Ngatai bt T. Witeri, 6-0, 6-0. Semi-finals: *Stewart bt Matoney, 6-1, 6-2; *Ngatai bt *Davy, 6-4, 6-4.

Women's singles, final: *L. Stewart bt *A. Ngatai, 6-1, 6-4.

Men's doubles, quarter-finals: *W. Sinel and M. Hetaraka bt *Ferguson and B. Murdoch, 9-8; *D. and S. Hingston bt J. Priestly and R. Graham, 9-0; *G. Motu and Gray bt M. Billington

and V. Taufa, 9-5; L. Neal and G. Moses bt S. Hopa and J. Paul, 9-5. Semi-finals: *Sinel and Hetaraka bt *D. and S. Hingston, 9-8; *Motu and Gray bt Neal and Moses, 9-3. Final: *Motu and Gray bt *Sinel and Hetaraka, 9-2.

Women's Doubles — quarter-finals: *A. White and A. Ngatai bt M. Walker and R. Aramakutu, 9-5; *J. Lydon and F. Loban bt R. Pai and G. Quinn, 9-1; *R. Te Pania and E. How bt A. and K. Latimer, 9-6; *L. Stewart and T. Witeri bt T. Manuel and R. Smith, 9-6.

Women's doubles, semi-finals: *J. Lyden and F. Loban bt A. White and A. Ngatai, 9-4; L. Stewart and T. Witeri bt R. Te Pania and E. Howe, 9-5. Final: Stewart and Witeri bt Lyden and Laban, 6-3, 7-5.

Mixed doubles, quarter-finals: *Gray and Stewart bt *J. Fergusson and T. Maloney, 9-2; R. Garratt and R. Rudolph bt M. Turner and M. Fatu, 9-4; *G. Moses and J. Lyden bt H. and S. Aramakutu, 9-0; *R. Tamaho and A. Ngatai bt *M. Hetaraka and A. Latimer, 9-7. Semi-finals: *Gray and Stewart bt Garratt and Rudolph, 9-0; *Tamaho and Ngatai bt Moses and