

Lawn bowls

Ra'anana sweeps northern pairs championships

By Norman Spiro

It was all Ra'anana's day when it went home with both trophies in the men's and women's annual National Northern Pairs Championship, played last weekend at the Haifa club.

In the doubles triumph, it was Zvika Hadar paired with Ronnie Baum who shared the top honors with Pat Breiter and Laura Nickel.

The tournament was inaugurated way back in 1977 to cater to bowlers of the northern areas, with the final rounds always culminating at the Haifa club.

In this year's field, 51 men's pairs and 24 women's pairs from Israel's eight clubs participated, and this – the 21st tournament – will be remembered for the dramatic finishes, where in both the men's and women's games the issue was decided in the last heads with the last bowls delivered.

In the final, Breiter and

Nickel faced off against Haifa's Jacquie Lieberthal and Amalia Levi. With Levi starting off well at lead and followed in fine form by Lieberthal, Haifa led 7-2 after six ends.

But then both Nickel and Breiter settled down with accurate bowling to match their opponents, and by the eighth end had taken a 8-7 lead, followed with peels at 11-all after 13 ends.

Haifa stayed in the chase with excellent saving conversion shots by skip Lieberthal. With added pressure, Haifa then led 15-11 with three ends to play, only for the Ra'anana pair to resist and counter, and to start the last end with a single shot deficit (14-15). The drama was then to follow.

Nickel, at lead, lay shot four inches from the jack to peel the game, and then Breiter, with her last delivery, coolly and calmly added a second, which, for once, Lieberthal failed to remove,



Laura Nickel, left, Pat Breiter, Ronnie Baum and Zvika Hadar.

conceding to the Ra'anana pair their dramatic last-end, 16-15 win.

For Breiter, though, her winning bowl was merely a repeat of her morning semifinal win, when, against Sayyon's Yael Bar-Ner and Gina Eting, she had started

the last end one shot down, and then with her very last bowl scored the winning two count by promoting her partner's bowl and following suit to jack for their 17-16 win.

In the other semifinal, Lieberthal and Levi outplayed Ramat Gana's Tami

Kamzel and Edna Zomberg 19-11, principally due to Lieberthal's outstanding drawing and conversion trailing shots.

In the men's all-Ra'anana final, Hadar and Baum were up against Raymond Sher and Denis Phillips. With excellent bowling by all four players, Sher and Phillips had kept the edge on their opponents, maintaining the lead throughout until the 16th end, when they led 14-10 with two ends to play.

The following penultimate end brought a critical change when Hadar and Baum scored a four count to start the last end level at 14-all. Baum, at lead, held the shot 8 inches from the jack, but Sher came closer to lie the game-winning shot.

Hadar had his last bowl to save and win the game, and with a full out drive – the shot of the day – he drove the jack to the ditch, and, with his following bowl, scored the winning shot for his 15-14 win.