

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
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Caption

Reefton-based Geraldine shearer Paul Hodges, pictured at Waimate in October. He won the Methven Shears Open final on Saturday. PHOTO/DOUG LAING SSNZ

A young gun beats an old hand at Methven Shears

Up and coming South Island Open-class shearer Paul Hodges stuck another feather in his cap when he won the Methven Lamb Shears Open final on Saturday by just eight hundredths of a point from veteran former New Zealand representative Grant Smith.

With defending champion Ant Frew and veteran 2012-2016 winner Tony Coster both missing from the lineup, it was up to Hodges to throw out the challenge, which he did first by heading the field of 11 in the heats.

Smith, the winner in 1997 and 2005 and having on March 3 finished runner-up in the PGG Wrightson Wool National Circuit final in Masterton, was top-qualifier for the three-man final, in which Pleasant Point veteran Kevin Hessell was first to finish, taking 15min 40.53sec for the 15 lambs, carrying about five months' first wool.

Hodges was second off five seconds later, with the best board points, but Smith, having finished in just under 16min 11sec almost stole the event with the best points in the pens.

It was Hodges' seventh Open final win around the smaller South Island shows in his two seasons since graduating after five Senior shearing wins in 2015-2016.

Having won at Reefton on February 3, it was his second Open win on lambs, and a win which pleased competition organiser Bruce Lilley who has been involved for about 34 years in running the event, one of the longest-running competitions in New Zealand.

"It is good to see the younger ones coming through," said Mr Lilley.

The presence of such competitors as Golden Shears winner Brandon Maguire Ratima and fellow Southland shearer Brayden Clifford in the lower grades helped boost the entries. Which were up 12 across the gareds on last year's entry.

On a day of mainly-closely main finals, Smith's son, Alex, won the Senior final by 0.8pts from Geraldine-based Chilean shearer Luis Pincol, and Maguire Ratima beat Cheviot shearer Liam Norrie by just 0.16pts in the Intermediate final.

Clifford won the Junior final by almost 3pts from runner-up Mitchell Menzies, of Ranfurly.

Three competitions remain in the South Island this season, the Flaxbourn A and P Show next Sunday and the Oxford and the Mackenzie Shears' national lambshearing championships at Fairlie on Easter Saturday and Easter Monday respectively.

RESULTS from the Methven Lamb Shears at Methven on Saturday, March 17, 2018:

Open final (15 lambs): Paul Hodges (Geraldine/Reefton) 15min 45.22sec, 60.93pts, 1; Grant Smith (Rakaia) 16min 10.93sec, 61.01pts, 2; Kevin Hessell (Pleasant Point) 15min 40.53sec, 70.36pts; Ringakaha Paewai (Gore) 4.

Senior final (8 lambs): Alex Smith (Rakaia) 14min 21.8sec, 50.88pts, 1; Luis Pincol (Chile) 13min 31.06sec, 51.68pts, 2; Duncan Leslie (Owaka) 14min 11.16sec, 57.06pts, 3.

Intermediate final (4 lambs): Brandon Maguire Ratima (Winton) 8min 35sec, 41pts, 1; Liam Norrie (Cheviot) 9min 3.13sec, 41.16pts, 2; Adam Stockdale (England) 9min 33.3sec, 47.15pts, 3.

Junior final (3 lambs): Brayden Clifford (Gore) 7min 16.37sec, 35.82pts, 1; Mitchell Menzies (Ranfurly) 5min 50.12sec, 38.84pts, 2; Makaira Keene Black (Timaru) 6min 20.34sec, 43.68pts, 3.

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