

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
October 29, 2017

Stratford retains Ashburton title

Southland shearer Nathan Stratford showed he is ready for a defence of his New Zealand Corriedale shearing title when he launched his first foray into Canterbury this season with a successful defence of the Open title at the Ashburton A and P Show yesterday.

In his 21st season of Open-class shearing, bestowed Master Shearer status in 2014 and with a World teams title in his kit this year, Stratford has now won 54 Open finals, including the Canterbury Show's Corriedale Shears title he won in November last year, and a fortnight ago the New Zealand Spring Championship at the 50th Waimate Shears.

The Invercargill gun faced an experienced field in yesterday's five-man final, including fellow former South Island national representatives Grant Smith and Tony Coster, both of Rakaia, and cut the 15 sheep out in under a minute each.

But in the end the closest was Matura shearer Brett Roberts, showing he's now ready to tackle the more elite guns of the Open grade, early in his fourth season since graduating soon after adding the 2014 Golden Shears Senior title to the Junior title he won on the Masterton stage in 2010. Stratford won by 2.75pts.

New Zealand-based Chilean shearer Luis Pincol scored his second win in a week in the Senior final, beating runner-up Vahni Stringer, of Ranfurly, by more than 4pts, Methven-based Duncan Leslie, from Owaka, celebrated his first attempt at competition by beating a strong Intermediate final field, and Darcy Tong, from Taihape, also completed a Rangiora-Ashburton double by winning the Junior final.

With Tony Dobbs and Phil Oldfield absent shearing for New Zealand in Australia, there were just three entries in the blades event. It was won by former New Zealand representative Mike McConnell, of Timaru, but there were plucky performances from Kaikoura rookie Marohi Kennedy, who shored the three sheep in 9min 7.24sec and beat McConnell by more than 2 minutes, and by Paul Gallagher, who stepped-down from the judges' stand to help make a final of it.

McConnell had the quality and experience to be a comfortable winner on overall points from Kennedy, wearing only his second blades contest, the first having been an Intermediate grade affair at Waimate two weeks earlier.

The Ashburton show attracted 46 entries (Open 16, Senior 7, Intermediate 11, Junior 7, Blades 3).

The next South Island competition is at Pleasant Point next Saturday, followed by the Marlborough A and P Show a week later and the Canterbury Show on November 16-17.

Results from the Ashburton A and P Show Shears at Ashburton on Saturday, October 28, 2017:
Open final (16 sheep): Nathan Stratford(Invercargill) 15min 36.94sec, 53.85pts, 1; Brett Roberts (Matura) 15min 39.57sec, 56.6pts, 2; Tony Coster (Rakaia) 15min 56.63sec, 58.53pts, 3; Grant Smith (Rakaia) 15min 50.87sec, 62.36pts, 4; Andy Mainland (Invercargill) 17min 20.9sec, 65.48pts, 5.

Senior final (9 sheep): Luis Pincol (Chile/Geraldine) 12min 20.62sec, 47.48pts, 1; Vahni Stringer (Ranfurly) 11min 54.69sec, 51.73pts, 2; Jarrad Morgan (Makahihi) 14min 21.72sec, 53.75pts, 3; Corey White (Waimate) 11min 10.4sec, 55.08pts, 4; Mitchell Murray (Amberley) 13min 34.5sec, 55.39pts, 5.

Intermediate final (5 sheep): Duncan Leslie (Owaka) 12min 18sec, 50.5pts, 1; Jesse Barclay (Mataura) 10min 51.81sec, 52.34pts, 2; Jordan Grant (Amberley) 12min 14.56sec, 55.13pts, 3; Liam Norrie (Cheviot) 12min 3.72sec, 57.39pts, 4; Sam Bryan (Darfield) 11min 59.78sec, 65.39pts, 5.

Junior final (3 sheep): Darcy Tong (Taihape) 12min 39.72sec, 50.65pts, 1; Henry Mayo (England) 13min 27.46sec, 60.04pts, 2; Fred Highton (England) 13min 9.35sec, 3; Mitchell Menzies (Ranfurly) 11min 48.53sec, 68.09pts, 4; Kelly Pohles (Dunsandel) 13min 28.19sec, 76.08pts, 5.

Blades final (3 sheep): Mike McConnell (Timaru) 11min 24sec, 40.2pts, 1; Marohi Kennedy (Kaikoura) 9min 7.46sec, 64.37pts, 2.

ENDS

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