

## Smith crowns stellar shears year with NZ Champs win - April 08, 2013

Hastings shearer Rowland Smith crowned a stellar couple of months on the competition circuit with a comfortable New Zealand Open Championship win set to a background of drama in Te Kuiti's packed Waitomo Cultural and Arts Centre on Saturday night (April 6).

The win in a six-man final of what should have been 20 sheep each was the 26-year-old Northland-raised gun's 14th in 11 weeks, including his first Golden Shears Open win in Masterton on March 2.

But there was drama all-around the winner on Stand 3, most-amazingly next-door on Stand 2 where fellow Hawke's Bay shearer Dion King was wondering how he'd beaten the all-conquering event favourite Smith by more than a sheep and set a record time, until his worst fears were realised. There'd been only 19 sheep in his pen.

Further along the board Te Kuiti shearer Mark Grainger was wondering why he still had a sheep in his pen, when he knew he'd already done 20.

Neither of the rare calamities affected the ultimate result however, for both King and 17-times winner, final second-favourite and Te Kuiti legend David Fagan had suffered major quality penalties early in the race, all-but putting them out of contention.

Having sacrificed even more quality points in a bid to compensate with better time points, the 38-year-old World lambshearing record holder King's initial 14min 46.11sec, later adjusted to accommodate the error, would still not have been sufficient to claim the title.

Ultimately credited with 15min 32.11sec, it was more realistically in the season of the drought more than half-a-minute slower than his time when first to finish last year, but still over half-a-minute quicker than second-man-off and Pongaroa farmer David Buick, 34, finishing in 16min 9.48sec.

Winner of the North Island Shearer of the Year final 24 hours earlier, Smith repeated a double he'd also achieved in 2011, and won the Open by 2.473pts from the runner-up, lone South Island finalist and Invercargill shearer Nathan Stratford, who produced the night's best quality points to secure second place, with Buick third, almost four points clear of King.

Youngest finalist Grainger, aged 24, son of 1985 Golden Shears champion Paul Grainger and in his 16th final of the season but yet to win an Open title or any of the championship titles on his home-town stage.



Marshall Guy adds the Junior shearing title to the Novice title he won in 2011, and the Golden Shears Junior title he won in Masterton.



TRAILBLAZERS: Sponsor's representative and Te Kuiti shearing stalwart John Grainger, of PGGWrightson, with the 12 foundation Province of Origin finalists



the championship titles on his home-town stage, claimed fifth place ahead of Fagan, aged 51 and leaving a crack at career No 620 for another day.

Smith's remarkable run started returning from a honeymoon on January 19 to compete at Wairoa, where he missed qualifying for a four-man final, only to learn he'd been kept out by a scoring error.

He's since been beaten in only five of 19 finals, a sequence of five consecutive wins up to the weekend before the Golden Shears including the Southern Shears in Gore on February 16 and the Counties Shears the next day in Pukekohe.



WINNERS: Ian Kirkpatrick, of Gisborne, and his uncle Johnny, of Napier, after winning the inaugural Province of Origin in the singlets of East Coast..

At the Golden Shears he gifted his \$3000 winning purse to cancer awareness, commenting it was the title that mattered most, but on Saturday, he was happy to accept the richest prize in World shearing, worth over \$20,000 and including a Can-Am Outlander Quad Bike, on which he later posed with wife and fellow World shearing record breaker Ingrid (nee Baynes), and prospective champions of the future.

Smith also wins a place in the New Zealand team to tour the UK for the second time, being joined by Rakaia shearer Tony Coster, who earlier on Saturday night restated his claims as the country's best multi-breeds shearer with victory in the final of the New Zealand Shears Circuit, shorn on merino wethers, crossbred second-shear ewes, and lambs.

Coster, who's never shorn in the UK, had had three consecutive wins in the country's premier multi-breeds event, the PGG Wrightson National, in 2009-2011, and had last month finished runner-up to the then reigning Golden Shears and New Zealand Open champion, Napier's John Kirkpatrick.

Never further back than third in 37 consecutive competitions over the last 13 months, apart from the less-familiar finewool of the New Zealand Merino Championships in October, Kirkpatrick had a rare semi-final elimination in Saturday's Open competition, but was a close runner-up to Smith in the NI Shearer of the Year final, and third in the Circuit final.

He could not be kept altogether out of the winners' circle, however, with victory in the Open Plate, and, with nephew Ian Kirkpatrick, of Gisborne, in the inaugural Province of Origin final, representing East Coast.

#### Top Guys

Kaeo shearer Bryce Guy extended his family's remarkable record at the championships over the last three years by winning a 12-sheep Senior final by half-a-point from Mataura's Brett Roberts. Guy had won the Junior title in 2011 and last year's Intermediate title, youngest brother Marshall on Friday added the Intermediate title to the novice title he won in 2011, and brothers Bevan (2011 Senior) and Charlie (2012 Junior) also feature on the event's honours board.

The Intermediate and Junior final wins by Shearing Sports New Zealand lower grade rankings winners David Gordon, of Masterton, and Marshall Guy completed doubles for the season, both having won at the Golden Shears.

Gordon, 16, ended the season as the most prolific winner in all grades with 16 victories in 23 finals, from the Otago Championships in Balclutha to the Easter Show in Auckland.

She's back! Tipene wins open woolhandling

A prospective school teacher who hadn't competed since her now home-town shears 12 months earlier, and who hasn't worked in a woolshed for at least three years, caused a boilover by winning the Open woolhandling final.

Aged 28, living in Te Kuiti with Welsh shearer Delwyn Jones and children Cari, 3, and Kaiana, 2, but still a Hawke's Bay girl from Porangahau, Hanatia Tipene said an hour after her win: "I'm still coming down. I only entered to support the local show."

The last time she featured prominently in a final was when runner-up to Joel Henare in the 2009 North Island Circuit final in Masterton.

Her win highlighted that while taking time out to raise children and this year start studying at Waikato University in pursuit of a dream to go primary school teaching, she hadn't lost the touch which had made her NZ Junior champion in 2004, and a New Zealand Trans Tasman Series representative in 2007-2008.

The final was missing three World champions who were all eliminated in the semi-finals - reigning World champion and new Golden Shears champion Henare, of Gisborne, 2008 World champion, six-times New Zealand champion, and school teacher, Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, and 2000 and 2005 World champion team member and Hawarden-based Tina Rimene, from Masterton.

But Tipene still had to overcome 1999 and 2003 winner Ronnie Goss, of Kimbolton, and Te Awamutu's Keryn Herbert, who was on Saturday acclaimed as a Master Woolhandler, and also, for the second year in a row, the top-ranked Open woolhandler of the season.

Tipene dominated on Saturday with consistent points across the aspects of board-judging, blend, oddments and fleece, Goss was runner-up, and third was Herbert, who made a phenomenal 18 finals during the season, from Winton in the south to Rotorua in the north, and won 7.

Ngaio Braddick, of Eketahuna, was fourth, having reached just one other final during the season, a week earlier at the Taranaki championships, and fifth was Lisa Fagan, who celebrated her home show also with only her second final of the season, having finished third at Rotorua in January.

Gordon's sister, Samantha, won the Senior woolhandling final, her first final since Apiti, a few days before the Golden Shears. But, as her third win of the season it secured the Senior rankings honours for the season.

The Junior woolhandling final provided a maiden win for Tiffany Kumeroa, of Whanganui, while the performance of David Gordon in finishing fourth was notable, securing the Junior woolhandling Nio 1 ranking, the first competitor to win both shearing and woolhandling rankings honours since the rankings structure was introduced in 1993-1994.

A treble for Aussie shearers

A team of three shearers from the Warrnambool show in Victoria extended a recent years Australia domination of trans tasman shearing by scoring a third consecutive Warrnambool-Te Kuiti trans tasman challenge, which features two open-class shearers and one senior from each country.

In a contest over 4 merino wethers and four second-shear crossbred ewes, Australians Wayne Hosie, Roger Mifsud and Nick Hearn beat an all-Hawke's Bay Kiwi combination of Smith and Dion King, also from Hastings, and Smith's brother-in-law, Lachie Baynes, of Wairoa, by 10pts. King, taking 12min 50sec, was first to finish, more than half-a-minute before first Australian shearer Hosie, and more than 5mins ahead of last-man-off Hearn. Hosie's 8pt margin over the next best in the quality was a major contribution to the outcome.

The win was further reward for the loyalty of Mifsud, a supporter of the Te Kuiti show for 17 years.

The Australian national team had also won three consecutive shearing tests against New Zealand until the Kiwis triumphed in their annual home-and-away series match in Masterton last Month.

A strong North Island team of Smith, Kirkpatrick and Fagan, and woolhandlers Keryn Herbert, of Te Awamutu, Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, and Cushla Abraham (nee Gordon, of Masterton) won the inter-island challenge, completing a double after winning the first leg of the series at the Southern Shears in Gore in February.

### Kirkpatrick wins Bowen Trophy rankings despite Smith challenge - April 05, 2013

Te Kuiti's 29th New Zealand Shearing Championships have opened with all but two of seven Shearing Sports New Zealand rankings winners for the season clearly decided before competition begins.

They include all four machine shearing grades, with Napier shearer John Kirkpatrick taking the Open-class honours for a record seventh season in a row.

Jack Fagan of Te Kuiti, will be the top-ranked Senior, while the Intermediate and Junior rankings are headed respectively by Golden Shears winners David Gordon, of Masterton, and Marshall Guy, of Kaeo.

Keryn Herbert, of Te Awamutu, wins the Open woolhandling honours for a third consecutive season, but the Senior and Junior woolhandling winners depend on the outcome of events in Te Kuiti where the establishment of the King Country Shears in 1984 led to the revival of the New Zealand Championships.



John Kirkpatrick, with the Hyundai Santa Fe has for the next year as a result of winning the PGG Wrightson National during the Golden Shears in Masterton, one of his four wins during the 2012-2013 season as goes into the week's New Zealand Championships as top-ranked Open shearer in the country for the seventh year in a row.

The points are based on placings in finals with a maximum of 12 in an A-grade show, 8 in a B-grade show and 6 in a C-grade show.

Including all events from the end of one-year's NZ Championships to the completion of the next, the 2012-2013 points uniquely include two Auckland Easter Shows, both won by Northland shearer Rowland Smith, now based in Hastings.

Kirkpatrick's comfortable advantage at the top of the rankings, unbeatable despite a maximum 36pts being on offer in three finals for Open shearers at Te Kuiti, comes despite having had one of his leanest years, with just four wins since the season started at the beginning of October. Smith has won 12 finals since late January, in addition to last year's Easter win.

But Kirkpatrick, who started the season as reigning Golden Shears and New Zealand open champions, reached the finals of all 23 competitions he contested, never finishing further back than 3rd, and as an extra also won the Australian Romney Shears title in Warrnambool, Vic. Rowlands shore in the finals on 19 of the 20 times he showed-up, including winning the Golden Shears Open in Masterton for the first time on March 2.

In Te Kuiti, Kirkpatrick will be presented with the rankings' Bowen Trophy which he has now won 8 times - firstly in 2002, when he also won the first of his four Golden Shears Open titles, and then consecutively since 2007.

Te Kuiti's David Fagan, ending his 32nd season of Open-class competition and winner of the trophy 10 times since it was first presented in 1994, is however challenging Smith for second place on the points

table. Fagan has won 5 of the 20 finals he contested, and goes into his hometown competition with a career tally of 619 Open-class wins around the World.

Rakaia shearer Tony Coster has six wins from 14 finals and hopes of finishing fourth on the rankings, while Te Kuiti's 113 finals, including two wins, has him in fifth place. Mark Grainger, also of Te Kuiti, hasn't won anything this year, but has reached 15 finals and is placed sixth in the rankings.

### **Lower Grades**

Jack Fagan has been confirmed as top-ranked Senior, with the most prolific finals record of any shearer in any grade, having made it 24 times, and winning 7. It gives him enough points to comfortably head off Bryce Guy, of Kaeo. Brett Roberts, of Matura, is third, followed by Lachie Baynes, of Wairoa, Hemi Braddick, of Eketahuna, and Golden Shears winner Cory Palmer, of Dipton, who has had six wins in 9 finals.

David Gordon had 15 wins in 22 finals to comfortably beat South Island-based fellow Masterton shearer Ethan Pankhurst, for their grade's honours, with Charlie Guy, of Kaeo, third, followed next by Sam Brooks, of Pio Pio, and Andrew Leith, of Dipton.

In the Junior grade, Marshall Guy has had 11 wins in 16 finals, leaving Josh Balme, of Te Kuiti, and Corey Smith, of Rakaia, to vye for second placing, followed next by Smith's cousin Alex, also of Rakaia.

### **Woolhandling**

Keryn Herbert retains top-ranking among the Open woolhandlers, with a prolific record of 17 finals, including 7 wins, with new Golden Shears champion Joel Henare, of Gisborne, with 7 wins in 12 finals, and defending New Zealand Open champion Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, 3 win in 13 finals, in a race for second place. They are comfortably ahead of Tina Rimene, of Masterton, Taiwha Nelson, of Alexandra, and Ronnie Goss, Kimbolton.

The Senior rankings have been a close lower North Island contest between Samantha Gordon, of Masterton, Kim Sowry, of Pahiatua, and Logan Kamura, of Marton, while in the Junior rankings, South Island-based Daine Rehe, of Te Teko, has an eight-point lead over David Gordon, with Golden Shears winner and Marlborough woolhandler Sarah Higgins, of Havelock, angling for third place.

## **Easter goodies make for big week in Te Kuiti - April 02, 2013**

New Golden Shears champion Rowland Smith will go into this week's New Zealand Shearing Championships as the hottest favourite in years after successfully defending his Northern Shears Open title at the Easter Show in Auckland on Saturday.

It was the two-metres-tall Hastings-based former Northland gun's third win in five finals since his Masterton triumph on March 2, when he justified the shortest odds ever offered by the TAB on a prospective first-time Golden Shears victor by downing four-times winner and defending champion John Kirkpatrick, of Napier. It was also one of the fastest 20-sheep finals ever seen in New Zealand, with 48-year-old Te Kuiti shearer Digger Balme taking time honours in 14min 25.95sec, an average of 43.3 seconds a sheep, including catching time.

He beat 26-year-old Smith off the board by 4.28 seconds, and King Country icon David Fagan, now 51, was next to finish in 14min 48sec, but there was more than a minute back to Kirkpatrick, while now-regular Open finalist Mark Grainger, also of Te Kuiti, was last to finish in 16min 35.74sec. Close watchers of Kirkpatrick would have detected a master-quality which was demonstrably better than the rest in the final, the job-points being almost enough to snatch a win and a \$1000 cheque which was claimed by Smith with an ultimate winning margin of just 0.107pts.

Fagan's third placing was his 13th top-three placing in 17 finals in his 31st season of Open-class shearing, while son Jack restated his penchant for podium finishes by reaching his fourth Easter Show final in three years - after winning the Intermediate final in 2011, stepping-up to place third in the Senior final a few minutes later, and returning last year to win the Senior title. Today he had to settle for third in his penultimate Senior competition before lining-up against his father in the Open class next season. It was won by Bryce Guy, of Kaeo, almost 2pts clear of runner-up Hemi Braddick, of Eketahuna.

Masterton teenager David Gordon restated his hit favouritism to win the New Zealand championships' Intermediate title when he claimed victory No 15 for the season with a crushing win by almost 10pts over his nearest rival today, while a second show title went Northland's way with Brya Harrison, of Okaihau, near Kaikohe, winning the Junior final. Shearing returned to the Mackenzie Highland Show at Fairlie on Easter Monday, with the Open final won by Eli Cummings, the Senior by Corey Palmer and 2012 World Championships representative Mike McConnell, of Albury, completed a weekend double with the blades, having also won at Oxford on Saturday.

Floyd Neil, from Taumarunui but based in the South Island, won the Senior final at Oxford, Ethan Pankhurst, from Masterton and also based in the South Island, picked up a double in the events' Intermediate finals, the last of the season in the South Island, while Alex Smith, from Rakaia, won the Oxford Junior final, matched two days later at Fairlie by cousin Corey Smith, also of Rakaia.

There was a real kick in the steps of those who revived the Mackenzie competition, with more than 70 shearers competing. Kevin Hessel was "very pleased," and commented: "We've done alright."