

MEDIA RELEASE (photos available on request, ph 0274-690644)
From Doug Laing, Media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
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The seven members of the New Zealand shearing team headed for Trans Tasman tests in Australia later this month showed they are timing their form to the minute as they dominated competitions in New Zealand at on Saturday.

Machine shearers Rowland Smith and John Kirkpatrick, both from Hawke's Bay, were first and second in the Open final at the Poverty Bay A and P Show Shears in Gisborne, teammate Troy Pyper was runner-up in the New Zealand Spring Championships' Open final at the 50th Waimate Shears in South Canterbury, woolhandlers Joel Henare and Maryanne Baty, both from Gisborne, won respectively at Waimate and Gisborne, and blades shearers Tony Dobbs, of Fairlie, and Phil Oldfield, of Geraldine, were first and third respectively in the Open blades final at Waimate, where they also won a test match against Australian shearers John Dalla and Ken French.

Three transtasman shearing sports tests, in machine shearing, blade shearing, and woolhandling, will be held during the Australian National Championships in Bendigo, Vic., on October 28.

New Zealand's home machine shearing and woolhandling tests, in a home-and-away series which started in 1974, will be held at the Golden Shears in Masterton in March.

Smith's win in Gisborne was his 20th win in New Zealand in a row, Henare's successful defence of the Waimate title was his sixth win in a row and fifth in a row in National title events across four different wool types in the South Island, and Dobbs' triumph was his fourth in a row at Waimate since coming out of an 18-year competition retirement. He has now won 11 Open blades titles at Waimate, dating back to his first in 1985.

Pyper was beaten at Waimate only by fellow Southland shearer Nathan Stratford, who won the 16-sheep final for an 8th time, having first won in 2001.

Stratford, a regular New Zealand representative until Pyper claimed his latest national singlet by being the best New Zealander in the national Merino championships final on October 7, again relied on his trademark quality to win by almost three points on Saturday.

Pyper however won the race, shearing the 16 sheep in 16min 1.2sec, just pipping Masterton shearer Paerata Abraham, with Stratford fourth to finish, in 16min 53.31sec.

The Senior shearing title at Waimate was won by Corey Smith, of Rakaia, the intermediate final was won by top 2016-2017 Junior Liam Norrie, of Cheviot, and the Junior inal was won by Brodie Horrell, of Gore.

The Senior woolhandling final was won for a second time in a row by Ebony Turipa, of Gore, and the Junior woolhandling final was won by Tyler Hira, of Onewhero.

There were three shearing sports competitions at the weekend, the other at the Ellesmere A and P Show at Leeston, near Christchurch, where the Open shearing final was won by Delwyn Henriksen, of Waipara.

ENDS

For further info:

Doug Laing

Media Officer

Shearing Sports New Zealand

Ph 0274-690644

media@shearingsports.co.nz

Website: www.shearingsports.co.nz