

## MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand  
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### Mutch puts it all together at Raetihi

Former World and Golden Shears champion Gavin Mutch fired possibly the loudest warning of his hopes of winning the New Zealand championship for a first time when he won the Waimarino Shears 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary Open final at Raetihi on Saturday.

The 38-year-old Mutch led for all but a few seconds of the four-man final over 20 sheep each, before reigning World champion John Kirkpatrick nudged in front down the last side and was first off in 16min 48sec.

But, with both putting more than two sheep around fellow finalists Murray Henderson and Mark Grainger, Mutch kept the quality together to card better than Kirkpatrick in both board and pen points and win by 1.2pts. Grainger had clearly the best pen points to claim third place overall.

It was Scotland international and Taranaki farmer Mutch's 17<sup>th</sup> Open final win in New Zealand since he stepped up to the top class after becoming the No 1 ranked Senior in 2001-2002, and his third in a season in which he has been runner-up nine times, eight of them to Rowland Smith, who did not defend the Waimarino title he had won six times in a row since 2012.

But Mutch has won the only two times that Smith has been beaten in New Zealand since the end of 2016, in the 2017 Rotorua A and P Show final in which Smith was fourth in January last year, and at Tauranga this year, when Smith failed to qualify for the final.

Mutch's Open wins in New Zealand, in almost 150 finals and including the 2012 World title and 2015 Golden Shears Open, both in Masterton, have come at 12 venues, dating back to his first in the national lambshearing championships at Raglan in 2007.

Others have been at Ohura, Wairoa, Stratford, Taihape, Marton, Rotorua, Aria, Tauranga, and now Raetihi, but on April 5-7 Mutch will

be hoping to add to the list the New Zealand Championships at Te Kuiti, where he was runner-up in the 2000 Junior final, but has made just two Open championship finals, for third in 2016 and sixth last year.

Napier shearer Ricci Stevens scored his second win in two outings since missing out on a place in the Golden Shears Senior final, and beat runner-up and Golden Shears winner Tegwyn Bradley by over 4pts, while Daniel Seed, of Woodville, in his second victory since placing fourth at the Golden Shears, won the Intermediate final by more than 5pts from runner-up Steve Hakaraia.

It was a big day for 17-year-old Daniel Biggs who had his first Junior win, following a sequence of promising performances which included sixth place in the Golden Shears Junior final.

The anniversary was marked with a presentation to Peter Lewer who has been involved with the Waimarino Shears about 35 of the 40 years, including commentating and judging.

RESULTS from the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary Waimarino Shears at Raetihi on Saturday, March 17, 2018:

Open final (20 sheep): Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Whangamomona) 16min 49sec, 62.95pts, 1; John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 16min 48sec, 64.15pts, 2; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 19min 26sec, 70.15pts, 3; Murray Henderson (Halcombe) 19min 10sec, 70.55pts, 4.

Senior final (10 sheep): Ricci Stevens (Napier) 11min 1sec, 44.35pts, 1; Tegwyn Bradley (Woodville) 11min 14sec, 48.4pts, 2; Sean Gouk (Masterton) 12min 21sec, 50.75pts, 3; Laura Bradley (Woodville) 14min 6sec, 59pts, 4.

Intermediate final (5 sheep): Daniel Seed (Woodville) 8min 2sec, 35.5pts, 1; Steven Hakaraia (Napier) 8min 39sec, 40.74pts, 2; Cullum Pritchard (Pongaroa) 7min 26sec, 42.5pts, 3; Topia Barrowcliffe (Piopio) 10min 18sec, 52.3pts, 4.

Junior final 4 sheep): Daniel Biggs (Mangamahu) 7min 40sec, 34.5pts, 1; Jonathan Painter (Pahiatua) 8min 35sec, 35.75pts, 2; Reuben Alabaster (Taihape) 7min 40sec, 37.5pts, 3; Leam Pritchard (Pongaroa) 8min 39sec, 39.7pts, 4.

Novice final (2 sheep): Levi King (Gisborne) 7min 11sec, 44.55pts, 1; Heath Barnsdall (Piopio) 8min 12sec, 50.6pts, 2; Samantha Baxter

(Pongaroa) 8min 36sec, 55.3pts, 3; William Martin (-) 7min 16sec, 69.3pts, 4.

Doug Laing  
Media Officer  
Shearing Sports New Zealand  
Ph 0274-690644  
[media@shearingsports.co.nz](mailto:media@shearingsports.co.nz)

Website: [www.shearingsports.co.nz](http://www.shearingsports.co.nz)

