

## Caption

Welsh shearer Matthew Evans (left) beats New Zealand star and former World champion Rowland Smith to the finish of the first CP Wool Shearing Series test in Marton today. But it was the quality that counted the New Zealand team of Smith and John Kirkpatrick beat the Wales team of Evans and Alun Lloyd Jones by almost 18pts. PHOTO/DOUG LAING SSNZ

## New Zealand gets it its shear revenge

World record breaking Welsh shearer Matthew Evans had a go at blowing New Zealand's World champions off the board in the first CP Wool Shearing Series test today, but says at the end it was never really going to happen.

But despite having been part of Wales' historic first-ever 4-0 drubbing of New Zealand in Wales last July, Evans, from Gower, said after a heavy defeat at the Rangitikei Shearing Sports in Marton: "We didn't expect to win."

He said "it's always tough in New Zealand", and for he and rookie international teammate Alun Lloyd Jones, from Llangollen it was an even taller order up against the New Zealand team of reigning World champion John Kirkpatrick and currently-near invincible 2014 World champion Rowland Smith, both of Hawke's Bay, on their home ground.

And so it was, in what is thought to have been the first shearing test in New Zealand shorn on lambs, despite Evans obviously liking for the younger ovines more familiarly shorn in competition in Wales, and coming 12 months after he shored 614 in eight hours in a three-stand World record near Te Kuiti.

Welsh teams have previously shorn lambs in New Zealand only against regional selections at Tauranga and Reefton, and had three regional matches on ewes, including a first Welsh win in the North Island, to start the tour from Taihape last weekend.

Evans, nevertheless, made it an interesting contest – not much less than 30cm shorter than the two-metres-tall Smith as they shored side-by-side in the race for fastest time over the 20 young ones.

And it was the red-singleted Evans who claimed the honour by finishing in 18min 7.57sec, beating Smith by more than 22 seconds, or just under half a lamb.

He conceded immediately, though, that the better time points would count for little when it came to the quality points, both Kirkpatrick, with best points overall, and Smith finishing more than four points better than Jones, and eight better than Evans.

"It was a learning curve," reckoned Evans, who with his teammate and the two Kiwis face three more tests in the New Zealand leg of the home and away series', at Balclutha next Saturday, Gore on November 17, and back in the North Island at Apiti on February 24.

"It was revenge," reckoned New Zealand manager and North Otago shearing judge Johnny Fraser, who had seen Smith, Kirkpatrick and one-test substitute Jack Fagan defeat last year, when the Kiwis did, however, have two wins over England.

Result:

CP Wool International Shearing Series, FirstTest (20 lambs): New Zealand 141.285pts (John Kirkpatrick 18min 34.98sec, 70.099pts; Rowland Smith 18min 29.71sec, 71.186pts, 2; beat Wales 159.142pts (Matthew Evans 18min 7.57sec, 78.379pts; Alun Lloyd Jones 20min 8.25sec, 80.763pts) by 17.857pts.

ENDS

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