

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
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A grand comeback in Canterbury Show woolhandling

Mum of two Angelique Miller was born in Rotorua, started life in the woolsheds working for her grandparents contracting in Gisborne, has lived in Christchurch, Australia and Gore, and worked in the UK.

But it all felt like she was back home today in Christchurch as she scored a surprise yet popular win in the New Zealand Corriedale Championships Open woolhandling final at the Canterbury Show.

While imbued with a “passionate” drive to do particularly well in challenging for a title she’d won twice before, as pre-married Angelique Gage in 2002 and 2005, along with a win in a Canterbury Shears 50th anniversary past winners event, the 6-7hrs drive from Gore the previous day with son Rj, aged 7, and daughter Keisha, 4, wasn’t just to be back among the friends in the industry and the sport.

She and husband and World record holding shearer Ryan Miller are planning to move back to Christchurch, and by the time he flies-home on Sunday from a stint working in Australia she hopes the house-hunt will have produced something worth banking on for a move in time to settle the children before the start of the new school year.

“I love Christchurch, and I love the Canterbury Shears,” said 35-year-old former New Zealand representative Miller after a stunning win, in a possible first-ever Open championship tie which needed a quality-marks countback to separate her from eventual runner-up and Marton woolhandler Logan Kamura.

There was not even as much as a thousandth of a point to differentiate between them in what would have been a longshot quinella after all marks had been counted.

Each was tied with 197.768pts – commentator Norm Harraway commenting “I don’t think I’ve ever come across that in woolhandling” – but it wasn’t the only drama of the day.

It started when hot favourite, World champion and defending Canterbury title-holder Joel Henare was eliminated in the heats in the morning, as was 2006 and 2014 winner Pagan Karauria, from Alexandra but who had made another trip from a base in Australia to try to nail another national title.

Henare, going for a fourth win in the event, an eighth finals win in a row dating back to his successful defence of the Golden Shears title in Masterton last March, and seeking a 97th win in an Open-class career now in its 12th season, took the demise in his stride.

Preparing to head home for a two-month break between the last woolhandling competition of 2017 and the first of 2018, the 26-year-old father-of-three said: “Today just wasn’t my day. You have your good days, and your bad, and today was that.”

“However, I’m not phased, I’ve had a good season, so I’m grateful for that.”

Miller, having in one break from the woolsheds spent a year as a flight attendant on Air New Zealand trans-tasman and Pacific services, had taken her longer-term leave from the woolsheds to raise the children.

Living in Australia she missed both home and the friends in the wool industry, and she and Ryan came home for his successful three-stand lambshearing record bid with Welsh pair Matthew Evans and Delwyn Jones in a King Country woolshed in January.

Four weeks later, Angelique Miller competed in the Southland All Nations Open woolhandling run in association with the World Championships in Invercargill, made the semi-finals and was placed fifth.

A field of 14 started today’s event, including four former winners, including King Country-Waikato woolhandler Keryn Herbert, the third placegetter in the final.

There were nine competitors in the Senior event won by Sharon Tuhakaraina, of Gore, and 10 in the Junior event won by Moerangi Thwaites, from Invercargill and sister of 2016 Senior winner Ngahua Thwaites.

Karauria got some compensation for her trip by being in a Nesbit Shearing four that won the teams shearing and woolhandling event, with shearers Mark Herlihy, of Rangiora, and Lyall Windleburn, of Waiau, and second woolhandler Kelly Macdonald, of Lake Hawea.

Meanwhile, it was experience over youthful exuberance in the final of the Canterbury All-Breeds Shearing Circuit which was won by Master shearer and former New Zealand World championships representative Grant Smith, of Rakaia, by almost two points from runner-up and fellow veteran Chris Jones, from Renwick, near Blenheim. Third in the six-man final over 10 sheep each was new hopeful and Pleasant Point shearer Ant Frew, who had been top qualifier with maximum points from his best-five performances in the 11 qualifying shows dating back to the heats at the Canterbury Show a year ago.

The two-day Canterbury Shears end tomorrow (Friday) with shearing in five grades, including blades.

Results of the woolhandling on the opening day of the Canterbury Shears and New Zealand Corriedale shearing and woolhandling championships in Christchurch on Thursday, November 16, 2017:

Woolhandling:

Open final: Angelique Miller (Gore) 197.768pts, 1; Logan Kamura (Marton) 197.768pts, 2; Keryn Herbert (Te Awamutu/Te Kuiti) 211.994pts, 3.

Senior final: Sharon Tuhakaraina (Gore) 155.344pts, 1; Emarina Watson (Christchurch) 202.438pts, 2; Nova Elers (Mataura) 239.5pts, 3.

Junior final: Moerangi Thwaites (Invercargill) 156.212pts, 1; Tyler Hira (Onewhero) 163.91pts, 2; Summer Pritchard (Pongaroa) 169.662pts, 3.

Shearing:

Canterbury Circuit final (10 sheep): Grant Smith (Rakaia) 19min 4.63sec, 86.93pts, 1; Chris Jones (Blenheim) 17min 36sec, 88.9pts, 2; Ant Frew (Pleasant Point) 19min 4.78sec, 90.24pts, 3; Ringakaha Paewai (Gore) 19min 28sec, 92pts, 4; Delwyn Henriksen (Waipara) 18min 27.1sec, 95.46pts, 5; Paul Hodges (Geraldine) 19min 2.66sec, 104.83pts, 6.

Shearing and Woolhandling:

Teams event (5 sheep): Nesbit Shearing (shearers Mark Herlihy, Lyall Windleburn; woolhandlers Pagan Karauria, Kelly Macdonald) 314.657pts, 1; Delwyn Henriksen Team 317.659pts, 2; Stronach Shearing 362.803pts, 3.

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