

Media Releases April 2017

Record breaking shearer claims 19th win in a row - April 18, 2017

Hawke's Bay shearer Rowland Smith yesterday completed his competition season with his 19th win and a possible season's record of 26 victories by claiming the national lamb shearing championship Open title at the Mackenzie A and P Show in Fairlie, South Canterbury.

Smith had also won the Open final shorn at the Royal Easter Show in Auckland on Saturday, after the reversal of an earlier decision to cancel the show's Northern Shears because of Cyclone Cook and shortening the shears to a mainly one-day event, although demonstration shears took place throughout the show.

Smith was one of two North Island shearers who then flew south for the Mackenzie Shears, which marked the opening of a new six-stand shearing pavilion and also the top-competition swansong of multiple national all-breeds champion and New Zealand representative, Tony Coster, of Rakaia.

The new facilities were formally opened by Shearing Sports New Zealand chairman and retired Te Kuiti shearing great Sir David Fagan, whose son, Jack, was third in the final after beating Smith in the race for fastest time. Fagan shored the 20 lambs in 16min 43.62sec, beating Smith by just under nine seconds, but finishing more than a minute and a half than quickest South Island shearer, Gore's Ringakaha Paewai.

The time points, along with best pen judging points, were crucial for Smith, while Fagan was unable to keep up the quality and ceded second place to Paewai who had the better combination of shearing board and pen points. Last to finish, in 19min 55.54sec, and seeking the Mackenzie title for a fourth year in a row, Coster had the best combination of board and pen points of all and claimed fourth place.

Smith, travelling almost every weekend from his farm near Hastings, competed in 30 competitions during the season, winning 26, which, with two in the UK last July and 19 in New Zealand last season have taken him to 47 wins in the last 18 months.

It also took him to a career total of 113 dating back to his first Open-class win in January 2008 at Kaikohe, about 100km from where he grew-up around Ruawai in Northland.

His wins in the 2016-2017 season won him Shearing Sports New Zealand's Open Shearing No 1 ranking for the first time and the first-ever cleansweep of the Golden Shears and New Zealand Championships Open titles, the South and North Island Shearer of the Year titles, and New Zealand's two premier all-breeds events, the PGG Wrightson National Circuit final during the Golden Shears in Masterton, and the New Zealand Shears Circuit final during the New Zealand Championships in Te Kuiti. The unbeaten run since the start of February also included the Southland All-Nations title, which he contested in Invercargill during the World Championships after missing a place in the championships when finishing only third in the national team trial in Christchurch in November.

Just nine days later he brought up a career century by winning the Counties Open final in Pukekohe, the day after winning the South Island Shearer of the Year and Southern Shears finals in Gore. There will be little rest for Smith who is planning an attempt on a World Record of 605 strongwool ewes in an eight-hour day in England in July, while also on a New Zealand team tour of the UK with new World Champion John Kirkpatrick, also of Hawke's Bay.

Result:

Mackenzie Shears Open final (20 lambs): Rowland Smith (Hastings) 16min 52.34sec, 60.717pts, 1; Ringakaha Paewai (Gore) 18min 21.41sec, 64.6705pts, 2; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 16min 43.62sec,

66.081pts, 3; Tony Coster (Rakaia) 19min 55.54sec, 68.577pts, 4; Eli Cummings (Pleasant Point) 19min 12.75sec, 69.6875pts, 5; Jason Ratima (Winton) 19min 33.78sec, 72.489pts, 6.

Royal Easter Show shearing cancelled - April 12, 2017

The Northern Shears, which would have been a feature of the Royal Easter Show in Auckland, have been cancelled because of the cyclone that has hit the region.

The decision to cancel was made today, on the eve of the first day of the show at which the Shears were to have been held on Friday and Saturday, possibly featuring the latest clash of new World champion John Kirkpatrick and Golden Shears and New Zealand champion and former World champion Rowland Smith.

Cyclone Cook has brought more than 30mm of rain to Auckland today, but 150-300mm is expected to have fallen in the 48 hours up to midnight tomorrow, even more than the 100mm-plus falls recorded during Cyclone Debbie last week, and in the previous week.

Shears competition co-organiser Emily Welch said there were multiple reasons for the cancellation, including risk to animal welfare and expected sheep transport difficulties on roads from the Port Waikatoa area, some of which been closed in last week's storm.

It's the fifth show to have been lost from the Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar in the season which ends on Easter Monday at the Mackenzie A and P Show in Fairlie, South Canterbury.

Also canned because of bad weather were the Kumeu Shears on March 11 and the Oxford Shears in North Canterbury last Saturday, while the Kowai Sefton Sports Shears which were to have been held on March 12 and were postponed for a week because of the rain.

The Kaikoura A and P Show at the end of February had been cancelled because of the damage and other impacts of the November earthquake, while there had been a pre-season decision not to stage a shearing competition this season at the Northern Wairoa A and P at Arapohue, near Dargaville, because of a clash with the World shearing and woolhandling championships held in Invercargill on February 8-11.

Hawke's Bay shearer Smith, who has won 18 finals in a row since the start of February, had already booked a flight from Auckland to the South Island to finish off his season at Fairlie, and said he still plans to be at the show on Monday when Shearing Sports New Zealand chairman Sir David Fagan will formally open a new six-stand shearing pavilion.

Fagan's son, Jack Fagan, is also planning to travel south to shear against Smith in the Mackenzie Open, which doubles at the New Zealand Lambshearing Championship.

Specialist shearer Coster to call time at Mackenzie Show - April 12, 2017

A Canterbury shearer who effectively climbed the mountain to win more times in the North Island than just about any other Southern gun is planning to bow out of top competition at Easter.

Tony Coster, 49, of Rakaia, will make his swansong attempting a fourth consecutive Mackenzie A and P Show's Open title in Fairlie on Easter Monday.

But he won't have it easy, for also shearing at Fairlie will be Hawke's Bay gun Rowland Smith, who flies south from the Royal Easter Show in Auckland hoping the weekend will complete a sequence of 19 wins since the start of February, including the Southland All Nations title and successful defence of the Golden Shears and New Zealand open championships.



Multiple New Zealand representative and champion all-breeds shearer Tony Coster shearing in possibly his last Canterbury circuit final last November. He retires from top competition at the Mackenzie A and P Show in Fairlie on Easter Monday.

Coster can, however, call on past experience in the hope of pulling out one last victory in an event which doubles for a third year in a row as the New Zealand lambshearing championship.

In 2014 he repulsed the challenge of another northern invader, winning by more than 7pts from runner-up and shearing legend the now Sir David Fagan, who will also be present on Monday to open the Mackenzie A and P Show's new six-stand shearing pavilion.

Of that win, a highlight because of who was there rather than that he won, he said: "It wasn't really his type of sheep, but I wasn't worried."

Coster has had more than 70 Open final wins, mostly in Canterbury and most prolifically at Mayfield, with 11 wins including five in a row up to last month's final when he was runner-up to up-and-coming Pleasant Pt shearer Ant Frew. He thinks his first competition was at Methven or Mayfield, in the late 1980s, but his first Open win is thought to have been a Mid-Canterbury Circuit final at Ashburton in 1993. It was one of 85 competitions throughout the country that season, which compares with the modern calendar of just over 60.

His specialty became multi-breeds events, regularly the Canterbury All-Breeds title but with the greatest successes coming in the North Island where he had five PGG Wrightson National Circuit final wins over five different sheep types at the Golden Shears in Masterton and two in the New Zealand Shears Circuit final in Te Kuiti. Both events include merinos.

The only South Island shearers with more individual wins at the Golden Shears are thought to have been the great Snow Quinn (six Open titles, one Senior and one World title) and Colin King (three Open titles and six in the Circuit).

The successes in Masterton, including a string of placings, launched him into 12 transtasman tests against Australia and two Shearing Sports New Zealand team tours of the UK, and he was acclaimed a Master Shearer in 2014.

Among the more memorable was the first test trip to Warrnambool in Australia in 2007 with Paul Avery, and with Joe Paewai. "We got our arses kicked, but we still had a good time," he said.

Sadly, Paewai passed away before they could reunite for the home test in Masterton a few months later. Another was the 2010-2011 series, with fellow Rakaia shearer Grant Smith, also a Master Shearer.

Coster, who runs a courier business with wife Sheryl, says he still shears about 25,000 sheep a year, and while Monday signals the end of the serious part of the competition career he expects he will still shear occasionally at "local" shows, especially if there's a need to make up numbers and provide competition for younger shearers trying to reach their goals. "I'm still enjoying it," he said. "But the body starts to wear down a bit, and you do have to do a bit extra if you are following the shows around."

There aren't any young Costers around to step into his moccasins. Twin daughters Samantha and Jamie helped out in the sheds when they were younger, but he reckons that while they may have enjoyed it, he did point out that it might be what they were doing for the rest of their lives if they didn't do well at school.

He said that if there was one regret it was that he hadn't taken the chance to work in the North Island when he was younger, to get-up the speed needed to be competitive in the major North Island championship finals, a factor highlighted in his only Golden Shears Open final in 2006, when winner Dion King shored the 20 sheep in 16min 56sec, Coster taking 19min 44sec.

Coster was particularly hopeful younger shearers would compete at the Mackenzie show, and learning from such shearers as Smith. "That's where they learn," he said.

A favourites double, and a rare treble at NZ Shears - April 01, 2017

Hot favourites Rowland Smith and Joel Henare kept their places at the top of New Zealand shearing sports retained their New Zealand Open shearing and woolhanding titles respectively in Te Kuiti tonight.

Each completing a double successful defence of the Golden Shears and New Zealand titles, they had dominated the New Zealand season, Smith winning 24 finals, with an unbroken sequence of 17 in the last two months, and Henare 13, including regaining the title of World Woolhanding Champion in Invercargill in February.

Completing a cleansweep of the two major Open crossbred second-shear titles and the two major multi-breeds series', it was Smith's fifth New Zealand Open title, with previous wins in 2011, 2013, 2014 and last year.

It was a fourth NZ Open Woolhanding title for Henare, who's third successive win in the event followed his first in 2010, and a Junior title at the championships in 2005 when aged just 12 years old.

It was a particularly special three days in Te Kuiti for Smith who added the Open title to the New Zealand Shears Circuit title he won earlier in the night and the North Island Shearer of the Year title he won on Friday night, becoming the first to win all three at one championships since Te Kuiti legend David Fagan won all three in 2002.

Acclaimed a Master Shearer by national body Shearing Sports New Zealand last August, a rare disappointment was finishing just third in the New Zealand World Championships team selection trial in November, and missing out on a chance to retain the World title he won in Ireland in 2014.

Eventual World champion and three-time New Zealand Open champion John Kirkpatrick, who had also won the North Island title twice and the Circuit once, was runner-up in both the Open and North Island finals, meaning he had been placed second 11 times in Smith's winning sequence.

Kirkpatrick was also third in the Circuit final in which the runner-up was his World Champion teammate, Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill.



Hawke's Bay shearer Rowland Smith with the big prize after a successful defence of the New Zealand Open shearing championship and winning two other titles at the championships in Te Kuiti..



World champion woolhandler Joel Henare, from Gisborne, after successfully defending the national Woolhanding championship in Te Kuiti tonight (April 1, 2017).

The Open final was a furious six-man affair over 20 second-shear sheep each, with Te Kuiti shearer Mark Grainger hitting halfway in front at 7min 44sec, almost 10 seconds clear of next man and 2015 winner Dion King, of Alfredton, who hit the lead on the 12th and eventually finished first in 15min 27.58sec, as all but 2012 World champion Gavin Mutch finished in under 16 minutes. King ultimately had to settle for fourth place overall.

Smith and Kirkpatrick are now expected to tour the UK as a New Zealand team in July, but the 30-year-old Smith has another assignment, an attempt on the World record of 605 strongwool ewes in eight hours on July 24 in Cornwall, England, where brother Matthew set the ultimate nine-hour record of 731 last July.

The Te Kuiti championships provided him rich pickings, including \$5000 in cash across the three wins, and the Open final's trademark Can-Am Outlander 570 Pro Quad Bike, valued at over \$15,000.

Henare completely dominated the woolhandling final winning by almost 40pts from runner-up and six-times winner Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, while first time NZ Open finalist Eramiha Neho, of Dannevirke, was third.

Earlier in the night, Taranaki shearer Darren Alexander completed a Golden Shears and New Zealand Championships double when he won the Senior final by almost three points from season's Senior rankings No 1 Paraki Puna, of Napier, with third place going to Taumarunui shearer Conan Te Kene, who'd finished almost 40 seconds quicker than the eventual winner and runner-up in shearing the 12 second-shear sheep in 12min 41.15sec. Alexander had the best quality points in both shearing board and pen points.

Drama at New Zealand Shearing Championships - April 01, 2017

The New Zealand Shearing Championships are guaranteed a dramatic end in Te Kuiti tonight with men of the moment John Kirkpatrick and Rowland Smith both qualifying for the Open Championship final.

Kirkpatrick, who in February won the World title for the first time at the fourth attempt, was top qualifier while fellow Hawke's Bay gun, 2014 World champion, Golden Shears champion and defending New Zealand champion and Smith qualified fourth in a list which also includes 2012 World and 2015 Golden Shears Champion and Scotland international Gavin Mutch.

The other three in the final of 20 second-shear sheep each are 2006 Golden Shears and 2015 New Zealand champion Dion King, of Alfredton, near Masterton, local Te Kuiti hope Mark Grainger, and Pongaroa farmer and shearer David Buick.

Other features of the night include the New Zealand Shears Circuit final of 10 ewes and lambs each, with Kirkpatrick and Smith up against Southland shearers Nathan Stratford and Troy Pyper, and Te Kuiti hopes Digger Balme and Jack Fagan, of Invercargill, and the Open woolhandling final in which Dunedi-based defending champion and World and Golden Shears champion Joel Henare, from Gisborne, faces former winners Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, Hanatia Tipene, of Te Kuiti, final newcomer Eramiha Neho, of Dannevirke, and Australia-based Kiwi Jo Tarrant.

Smith has a possibility of completing a rare treble of three Open shearing titles, after winning the North Island Shearer of the Year final last night.

Rare treble target for shearer Smith at Te Kuiti - April 01, 2017

Hawke's Bay shearer Rowland Smith is on the way to a rare treble at the New Zealand Championships in Te Kuiti where he last night regained the title of North Island Shearer of the Year.

He's a warm TAB favourite to win the New Zealand Shears Circuit for the first time and successfully defend the New Zealand Open title on the last day of the three-day championships today.

No one has won all three titles in one season since legendary Te Kuiti shearer and now Sir David Fagan did so in 2002, bouncing back from his first defeat in Masterton's Golden Shears Open final in 13 years.

New World Champion and Napier shearer John Kirkpatrick, who won that 2002 Golden Shears title and who has won all three Te Kuiti titles over the years, is the biggest threat, although his second placing in last night's North Island final was the 10th time he'd been runner-up in Smith's sequence of now 15 consecutive wins since the start of February.

Kirkpatrick won the six-man race over 10 second-shear ewes and 10 lambs which he shored in 15min 42.3sec, but Smith was otherwise always in charge with the best quality points both on the board and in the pens, and added the title to his South Island Shearer of the Year series win in Gore in February.

Third was the 2012 winner, former Hawke's Bay shearer Dion King, who now lives at Alfredton, in Wairapa.

Smith, the 2014 World champion, made a particular point of thanking those involved in running competitions throughout the country - "including all the workers out back" - with a plea to younger people to step-up to help keep the competitions alive.

He also featured in a Northern win in an inter-island teams match, joined by Kirkpatrick and third shearer Mark Grainger, of Te Kuiti, and woolhandlers Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, Keryn Herbert, of Te Kuiti, and Sue Turner, of Taumarunui.



Hawke's Bay shearer Rowland Smith extends a winning sequence this season to 15 wins by reclaiming the North Island Shearers of the Year title in Te Kuiti on March 31, 2017.



Wairoa teenagers Ariana Hadfield and boyfriend Angelo Manttan (far right) seem to have other things on their mind after the Novice shearing final at the New Zealand Shearing Championships in Te Kuiti. They were first and second respectively.



The 2012 World champion, Whangamomona farmer and Scotland international Gavin Mutch, dominated a trans-tasman challenge in which his Te Kuiti NZ Shears team, also including David Buick and Taumarunui Senior shearer Conan Te Kene beat the team from the Warrnambool Show in Victoria, comprising Te Kuiti regular Roger Mifsud, Sam Mackrill and Senior shearer Lee Harris, who has shorn most of the last two summers in New Zealand.

Earlier yesterday, there was more than shearing in the air as Wairoa teenagers Ariana Hadfield, 19, and boyfriend Angelo Manttan, 18, were first and second in the Novice shearing final.

Hawke's Bay farmer and 43-year-old rookie competitor Mark Ferguson added the Junior title to that he won in the Golden Shears Junior final four weeks ago, and last night Masterton-based Sean Gouk won the Intermediate final, his first win since his only previous victories in two Junior finals on successive days two years ago.



The wool files at the end of the inter-island shearing and woolhandling match on the second night of the New Zealand Shearing Championships being held in Te Kuiti on March 30-April 1, 2017. The match was won by the North Island team of shearers Rowland Smithy, John Kirkpatrick and Mark Grainger, and woolhandlers Sheree Alabaster, Keryn Herbert and Sue Turner.