

King pins hopes on big wins in the South - January 23, 2012

It's five years since Dion King set the nine-hour lambshearing record, and almost another year since he won the Golden Shears Open and PGG Wrightson double at Masterton in 2006.

But at 35, with a degree of ominousness for his opponents, he reckons he's entering the best years of his shearing career, after winning both the Northern Southland Community Shears title on the longwool at Lumsden and the national crossbred lambshearing title at the Winton A and P Show.

The wins came just 24 hours apart, on Friday and Saturday, and established King as a true contender for World championships selection.

His maximum points for two days' work rocketed him up the table from 14th last week to be all-but safe sitting at No 4 with three rounds to go before the selection series final in Gore. King says "it's not the end of the World" if he doesn't make the two-man machine shearing team for the Worlds in Masterton in March.

"There could be three different New Zealand teams named in the next couple of months," he said. "I wouldn't actually mind going back to the UK."

Runner-up to fellow Napier gun John Kirkpatrick in the national lambshearing championship at Raglan earlier in the month, and winner of titles at Warnambool and his home Great Raihania Shears in Hastings earlier in the season, King was the man in charge in only his second visit to Southland.

He was first to finish both finals, cutting the 20 ewes out in 17min 17sec on Friday, with a 10-second margin to second-man-off Matthew Smith, and on Saturday blew 20 sizeable lambs away in 15min 34sec, eight seconds ahead of Kirkpatrick.

With the near challengers both dropping away amid the clicking of the judges' counters, King led home the same trifecta on each day, Te Kuiti evergreen David Fagan as runner-up and local hope Nathan Stratford, third.

Stratford maintained his lead in the series, with Kirkpatrick and Fagan next. reigning World champion Cam Ferguson, of Waipawa, dropped to fifth, after failing to reach either final. New Zealand Open champion Rowland Smith climbed into the 12 for the first time after placing fourth in the lambs final.

Former World Champion Joanne Kumeroa, of Whanganui, won the Lumsden woolhandling final, and missed out by one place on the Winton final, which featured a return to winning form by Joel Henare, of Gisborne.

Reigning World champions Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, and Keryn Herbert, of Te Awamutu, had mixed results, appearing in one final each. Alabaster was third to Kumeroa and Monica Potae, of Milton, while Herbert was runner-up to Henare.

Kirkpatrick returned to winning form at Levin on Sunday, his sixth victory of the season. The absence of the big guns in the south provided plenty of opportunity for others in two Open finals in the North Island on Saturday, with Digger Balme traipsing successfully his happy hunting-ground in Tauranga yet again and Tama Niania, of Gisborne, getting his maiden top-class win at the Wairoa Show.

A feature of the weekend was the number of overseas competitors making their marks in finals, buoyed perhaps by England World Championships woolhandling representative Natalie Crisp's winning of the national junior lambshearing final at Raglan on January 7.

Three more victories came at the weekend with Hastings-based Northern Ireland shearer Jack Robinson winning senior titles at both Wairoa and Levin, and English shearer Dean Nelmes claiming the intermediate title at Tauranga on Saturday, beating Kaeo's Bryce Guy in a final in which Welshman Digger Lewis was third.

Also in Tautranga, Welsh hope Gareth Daniels was runner-up to Balme, while Cory Mifsud, from Australia, and UK shearer Ross Crang were second and third to Waipukurau's Tysson Hema in the senior final.

At Wairoa Irish shearer Colm McLaughlan was fourth in the Junior final.

In the South Island, Alan Brady, of Scotland, was third in the Lumsden intermediate final in which fifth place went to Isle of Man shearer Daniel Creer, who backed-up well with fifth again the next day at Witton.

Stefanie Kauschus, who competes for Germany in the World Championships woolhandling, was fourth in Saturday's junior shearing final at Winton.

Shearing Record - January 20, 2012

King Country shearer Stacey Te Huia is moving to Australia, with plenty to show for his World Record day-out with Waikato shearer and farmer Sam Welch this week.

Handshakes were all-but off the list as Te Huia, from Te Kuiti, displayed a right paw swollen from tendon damage and callouses he tried to ignore throughout the day at Te Hape, east of Benneydale, where the pair set a new World two-stand, ewe-shearing record of 1341 in nine hours on Wednesday (Jan 18).

Ignored, that is, apart from the acupuncture and massage to "release the lactic acid" during the meal and smoko breaks.

"It went to the pack in the first half-hour," he said. "It got to a point where it couldn't get any worse."

It affected the control of his handpiece, and he said: "I couldn't extend the grip. It was spinning all over the place."

As he helped get the remote State Highway 30 woolshed back to normal, the morning after a dramatic and hard day, and a possibly harder night, for which there was no therapy, he also displayed a small gash in his left forearm where an errant handpiece at one point went close to making the unkindest cut off all.

Welch meanwhile displayed a limp, from treading on his comb during the last run of the 5am-5pm day, as they finally passed the required average hourly rate and broke by six the previous record of 1335 set by Southland shearers Darin Forde and Wayne Ingram 16 years earlier.

"I felt it," said Welch, who showed no sign of feeling it at the time. "I could feel the blood in my sock."

And then there were the sheep, weighing an average 60kg and comfortably clipping over the required 3kg each.

"They were pretty aggressive," Welch said. "I don't think I had a single sheep sit all day. Stacey reckoned the same."

What these guys go through in this case after preparation which started exactly a year earlier when Te Huia's father, shearing instructor and former contractor Dean Te Huia, rang Welch on January 18 last year and asked if he was interested.

Welch, based at Waikaretu where he and wife and World women's nine-hour lambshearing record holder Emily run a stud sheep operation in addition to a shearing contacting business with Tony Clayton Green, had given-up on a dream of having a go at a record..

There was no hesitation in grabbing the opportunity, in what became a unique reunion for two 33-year-olds who had once shared the same classroom at primary school in Marton.

Until a couple of years ago, they hadn't seen a lot more of each other, the Te Huia family - shearing in every gene - moved to Te Kuiti, and Welch moved to Dannevirke, where he, too, took up the handpiece.

The nine-hour shearing day, an industry tradition now limited mainly to the more remote of shearing stations around the country, has become the marathon of the records game, where it is taken-on only by the most brave.

There hadn't been any other bid for the two-stand record since Forde and Ingram did their stuff on February 1, 1996.

Likewise the solo record of 721 which Te Huia had also hoped to break, although it was obvious from the start on Wednesday that he wouldn't get close to the ultimate goal of the tally shearer. It had been attempted only twice in 15 years, most recently in 2007 when Porangahau shearer Rodney Sutton claimed the record-breaking sheep with just four seconds to spare, eclipsing the mark of 720 shorn by Forde in 1997.

It takes much more than shearing to get ready for the big day, and from the time Welch said "yes" he and Te Huia began an additional regime of running, and cycling, and gym work, to get them as ready as they could be.

"I hadn't done any running since school," said Welch, who held his end-up on the day superbly, targeting Ingram's 647 contribution to the 1996 record and ending the day without concern from the judges and tallying 667, at least 120 more than he'd ever shorn in a day.

Te Huia's previous best was 603, the eight-hour record he set at nearby Mocketenui in December 2010, and his "bit" was to firstly target the 688 shorn by Forde in the previous record.

It was a disappointing start and after the World Shearing Records Society judges rejected two for cuts in the first two hours from 5am to breakfast at 7am, his 143 was well shy of the 160 he had hoped for if he was to reach either of his personal targets for the day.

His cutters were displaying the one flaw in his shearing make-up - "I can't grind" - and for the rest of the day, comprising four runs of 1hr 45mins each, Te Huia relied on cutters supplied and worked by Te Kuiti shearing legend David Fagan, who in 1994 was the first to take the record past 700.

Mum Jo Te Huia, who, like them all was still coming down from daughter Kerri-Jo's lambshearing record of 507 in eight hours in the same shed the previous week, was nervous for the pair's combined opening run tally of 292 was 14 shy of the 306 shorn by Forde and Ingram.

In the industry and sport's unique spirit of camaraderie, a number of former record holders were on hand to help another mark go - among a support crew of at least 40 - and the new plan for looking after the gear worked.

Neither shearer had any more rejected by the judges, and Te Huia saved his best for last, with 134 in the final 105 minutes, 47 seconds a sheep, including the 7-10 seconds catching-time between animals.

Welch came home with 129 in that last run, and their combined last dig of 263 compared with the 152 shorn by Forde and Ingram as they ended their day..

Te Hape's not a big shed, but at least 150 had packed in to share the moment, with pandemonium as the record was broken just three minutes before the bell at 5pm.

Te Huia and Welch hadn't shared the supporters worries that the record might have slipped from their grasp early in the day, and Welch said: "We didn't think we were in trouble."

Unaware at the time of the previous record's run-by-run statistics, they hovered only marginally behind the required hourly rate until their final burst.

While Welch had achieved everything, and after shearing a few days for Te Kuiti contractor Neil Fagan, to pay home to the help given in staging the record before going back to the farm and the shearing gang, Te Huia was less precise about his future.

He was off to base himself with Bathurst contractor Andy Duggan in Australia, where he spent three months working from September to November, but he was in two minds about further records.

On the night he pledged no more, as he had in 2010 when he reckoned after his eight-hour record he would get more serious about competition shearing - a short-lived experiment, as it evolved.

This time there was a pledge of more commitment to family, daughters Kalani, 3, and 13-year-old Shaylin, who he had to get back to Australia in time for school.

But come morning, there were murmurings of more records somewhere in the Te Huia family next year, although Stacey reckoned he'd get in a couple more weeks in the shed in Aussie, and then take a break and try some forestry or mining for a while.

Who knows? Who shears?

Shearing: Hawke's Bay gun wins big in Southland - January 20, 2012

Hawke's Bay shearer and New Zealand representative Dion King scored an important victory when he won the Northern Southland Community Shears Open final near Lumsden today.

It was the third of seven qualifying rounds in Shearing Sports New Zealand's World Championships selection series, and he just pipped legendary David Fagan, of Te Kuiti, showing he's still in the race at the age of 50, and Southland hope Nathan Stratford.

Just 0.81pts covered the first three placings, King taking his edge by shearing his 20 big, woolly ewes in just 17min 17.09sec, 10 seconds ahead of next-man-finished and Hawke's Bay-based Northlander Matthew Smith, who with quality points counted ultimately claimed fifth place.

It gave King the maximum 12 series points, which he will try to repeat in the national Crossbred Lambshearing Championship at the Winton A and P Show tomorrow (Saturday).

The quality of the competition was highlighted when boyth defending champion ad favourite John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, and World champion Cam Ferguson, of Waipawa, failed to qualify for today's final.

But they remain likely qualifiers in.

The senior final was a case of the pupil beating the master, 17-year-old Maitua shearer Brett Roberts claiming the honours ahead of his grandfather, 56-year-old contractor Cliff Waihape, who was fifth.

Australia-based Joanne Kumeroa kept her sights on the chance of winning another World title taking today's Open woolhandling final, also part of a selection series. She won comfortably from runner-up Monca Potae, of Milton.

Record bid challenge's shearing's Everest - January 13, 2012

One of the greatest tallies ever shorn in a New Zealand woolshed will be challenged in a two-man World record bid in the King Country on Wednesday.

The challenge to the solo nine-hours record for strongwool ewes will be made by 33-year-old Te Kuiti shearer Stacey Te Huia.

It will be the first attempt at the record since Porangahau shearer Rodney Sutton shored 721 on June 31, 2007, catching the crucial record-breaking sheep with just four seconds to go on the clock.

The previous record of 720 had been shorn by Southland shearer Darin Forde 10 years earlier. The bid will come during an attempt by Te Huia and Waikaretu and shearer and farmer Sam Welch, 33, on one of the World Shearing Records Society's longest standing records, the two-stand mark of 1335 shorn by Forde and fellow Southland shearer Wayne Ingram on February 1, 1996.

It will take place at Te Hape, east of Benneydale, where Te Huia's youngest sister, Kerry-Jo, set a women's eight-hour lambs record of 507 last Tuesday.

She will take the role of woolhandler in Wednesday's bid, while Welch will be helped in his bid by wife Emily, the women's World nine-hour lambs record holder.

The solo ewes record is regarded as the Everest of shearing records, hence Te Hui's bid being only the first attempt in 15 years.

But his father, Tectra instructor Dean Te Huia, said much depends on the day.

Stacey Te Huia's biggest tally in day on ewes is 603, a World record tally for eight hours which he shored in December 2010, and asked about the chances of the nine-hour record, Dean Te Huia said: "It is his ultimate goal.."

The day starts at 5am with a two-hour run to breakfast. There are then four 1hr 45min runs, from 8-9:45am, 10.15am-midday, 1-2.45pm, and 3.13-5pm.

In 2007, Sutton started with 158 in the first run, followed by 140, 142, 140 and 141, averaging under 45 seconds a sheep, and filling 14 bales of wool.

In the 1996 two-stand record Forde shored 688n and Ingram 647.

Shearing record: An apprentice, but still the World's best

Kerri-Jo Te Huia may be just an apprentice, but today she became the new face of the shearing World today as she smashed an eight-hour record in a remote King Country woolshed.

The 30-year-old from Te Kuiti, in only her fifth season of shearing and nearing the end of a Modern Apprenticeship with industry trainers Tectra, she shored 507 lambs in eight hours at Te Hape, east of Benneydale, becoming the first woman to do 500 in an eight-hour day.

She hammered the founding record 470 set in a nearby woolshed by university graduate and Wairoa shearer Ingrid Baynes three years ago.



Proud mother Jo Te Huia speaks to a television crew after daughter Kerri-Jo broke the women's eight-hour lambshearing record.

Despite an aching lower back, tended between runs by eight-months-pregnant sister Natalie who flew from South Australia for the event, Te Huia had no problems maintaining the required speed and quality, shearing constantly over 60 an hour with run-tallies of 124 in both morning runs, 7-9am and 9.30-11.30am, accelerating with 133 from 12.30-2.30pm and came-home with 126 in the last two hours to 5pm.

She broke the record just before 4.26pm, and reached her goal of 500 with six-and-a-half minutes to go.

The lambs constantly clipped more than 1.1kg each and with the average weight per animal estimated at 32kg, Te Huia hauled about 16 tonnes of lamb onto the board throughout the day.

"I wouldn't want to go through that again in hurry," she said, culminating more than nine months of preparation and rolling her eye at the suggestion of a crack at the ultimate nine-hour, five-run record of 648, set by Port Waikato shearer Emily Welch four years ago.

Baynes was present to see the last moments, as were Welch and several other record breakers, including King Country icon David Fagan who mastered the gear for the day, including combs used at the rate of two a run, and cutters at about eight a run.

Also present at the end was Irish shearer Ivan Scott who only 24 hours earlier set a new men's record of 744.

Her woolhandler, in a record overseen by four judges appointed by the World Shearing Records Society, was Jaz Tipoki, from Martinborough

Te Huia is the third of the family to hold a World record, with brother Stacey, the current men's eight-hours ewes record holder monitoring her pace closely on the board. He will be tackling another record on the same board next week, with his record-breaking youngest sister "rousieing" for the day.

The youngest of the five shearing progeny of shearing contractor and instructor Dean Te Huia and wife Jo, Kerri-

Jo shore in Australia in the New Zealand winter, and said it had been tough regaining her style back in New Zealand, where she has worked mainly in the King Country but also did two seasons in Wairarapa.

UPDATE: Te Kuiti shearer on target to shatter women's record - January 10, 2012

Te Kuiti shearer Kerri-Jo Te Huia has halfway in her World record attempt in the King Country marginally shy of the pace required to become the first woman to shear 500 lambs in eight hours.

When the second of the four two-hour runs ended at 11.30am she had shorn 248, well ahead of the pace set by university graduate and Wairoa shearer Ingrid Baynes who shored 233 in the four hours to lunch in setting her record of 470 three years ago.

Shearing at Te Hape, east of Benneydale, Te Huia shored 124 from the start at 7am to the morning smoko break at 9am, and looked to be stepping-up the pace when 64 were sent through the porthole in the next 60 minutes, her best hour of the day. In just under an hour to lunch she shored another 60.

Te Kuiti shearer on target to shatter women's record

Te Kuiti shearer Kerri-Jo Te Huia is on target to smash a World shearing record and possibly become the first woman to shear 500 lambs in eight hours. Shearing at Te Hape, east of Benneydale in the King Country, Te Huia shored 124 from the start at 7am to the morning smoko break at 9am, the first of four two-hour runs targeting the eight-hour lambshearing record of 470 established at nearby Moketenui by university graduate and Wairoa shearer Ingrid Baynes three years ago.

Te Huia is the "baby" of the five Te Huia off-spring, of whom brothers Hayden and Stacey have also had their names in the books of the World Shearing Records Society.

With wet weather closed-in around the woolshed, the record is being closely monitored by father, contractor and instructor Dean Te Huia, and four judges, who said the shearer was having no difficulty with the quality of her work and was comfortably meeting the standards required.

The average wool weight of 1.1kg per lamb was comfortably above the minimum allowable 0.9kg, the first-run quality rating of just over 9pts was comfortably under the maximum allowable 12pts, and the lambs were estimated to average about 32kg.

If she reaches the quietly-held goal of 500, she will have hauled about 16 tonnes of lambs onto the board during the day, and shorn them at an average of about 57.6 seconds each.

The second run is from 9.30-11.30am, the third from 12.30-2.30pm and the last from 3-5pm.



Te Kuiti shearer Kerri-Jo Te Huia watched closely by father Dean Te Huia towards the end of the first run in an attempt on the women's World eight-hour lambshearing record today at Te Hape, east of Benneydale in the King Country. She shored 124 from 7am to 9am, comfortably ahead of the pace required to break the record of 470. It's scheduled to end at 5pm.
PHOTO: Doug Laing, Shearing Sports New Zealand

Yesterday, Irish shearer Ivan Scott averaged 38.45 seconds a lamb as he shored 749 in a men's record attempt east of Taupo, but five were rejected by the judges for cuts as he was credited with an official new record of 744.

Irishman Scott reclaims shearing record

There were some anxious moments in a woolshed near Taupo today, but none handled it better than man-in-the-middle and Irish shearer Ivan Scott as he reclaimed the World eight-hour lambs shearing record.

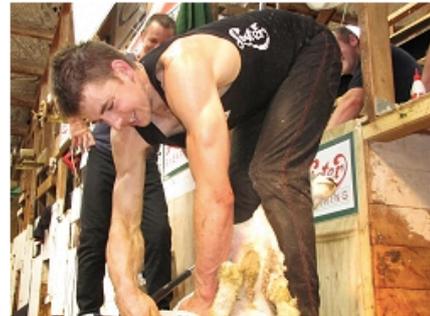
The 30-year-old four-times All-Ireland Champion, a regular shearing in New Zealand since he was a teenager, shored 744 lambs, but it was only in the last minute and a half that he claimed the record back from Hawke's Bay World champion Cam Ferguson who shored 742 in a King Country woolshed on January 10 last year. Scott, from Kilmacrennan in County Donegal, calmly smiled to himself as he shored down the last side and turned off the machine for the last time a tick after 5pm, leaving the commentary to judging convenor Bernie Walker, of Euroa, Vic.

Confirming the record in front of over 100 supporters at Opepe, 10km east of Taupo, Mr Walker said: "The fact that he's broken it by just one or two goes to show how tough it is. It's taken him eight hours, to get that close."

Scott, working for Rotorua contractor and record attempt organiser Jeff Dorset, previously held the record for two years, after shearing 736 at Rerewhakaaitu, near Rotorua, in December 2008. On that occasion he opened with a blistering pace, shearing 192 in the first of the four two-hour runs, and had nine lambs rejected during the day before the final tally was recorded. Needing to better 185.5 per run today, he shored an unblemished 187 in the first run from 7am to morning smoko at 9am. He followed with runs of 189, 187 and 182. Although there had been five rejected for cuts throughout the rest of the day, he had the target well in sight by lunchtime, when he was five ahead of Ferguson's tally at the same stage. Scott saw Ferguson break his record a year ago, and determined he wanted it back. The success came yesterday with an army off support from back home, including Republic of Ireland teammate Stanley Allingham, of Garrison, with whom he will shear at the 15th Golden Shears World Championships in Masterton in March.

Chances were he would be back on the board tomorrow (Tuesday). There was no let-up after the 2008 record, and the next morning he carried on with 168 in his first two hours.

The shearing focus now turns to Te Hape, near Bennydale,



Irish shearer Ivan Scott relaxes with a triumphant smile on the last side of his last lamb while breaking a World lambshearing record today at Opepe, near Taupo, NZ. Scott shored 744 lambs in eight hours, breaking the old record by just two, a tally of 742 shorn by World champion Cam Ferguson, of Waipawa, NZ, on January 10 last year.



All Ireland support after a successful World shearing record attempt by Ivan Scott, of Kilmacrennan, Co Donegal. Scott shored 744 lambs in eight hours at Opepe, near Taupo, NZ, beating the previous record by just two lambs. From left: Sean Kerlin, of Claudy, Northern Ireland; Jack Robinson, of Claudy, Northern Ireland; Stanley Allingham, of Garrison, Republic of Ireland; record-breaker Ivan Scott, of Kilmacrennan, Republic of Ireland; John Buchanan, of Ballymena, Northern Ireland; Colm McLaughlin, of Claudy, Northern Ireland.

Woolhandlers take spotlight at national lambshearing champs

The pressure will be on New Zealand's top woolhandlers at the Western Shears' national lambshearing championships in Raglan on Saturday (January 7) as they resume a year-long competition to find two representatives for the World Championships in Masterton in March.

There has been no woolhandling competition at Raglan since 2009, but it returns for an important 8th round of the 12-round qualifying series which culminates with a top-six semi-final and final showdown at the Southern Shears in Gore on February 17-18. Heading the series is two-times World champion

Joanne Kumeroa, of Whanganui, followed by fellow World teams champions Keryn Herbert, of Te Awamutu, and 2008 individual champion Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape.

Reigning Golden Shears champion Kumeroa, now based mainly in Australia, won the World individual title in 2003 and 2005 and teams titles in 2005 and, with Alabaster, in 2008. Herbert won the teams title with Alabaster in 2010.

Currently also in the top six are Joel Henare, of Gisborne, and Bernadette Forde, of Tuatapere, and Tia Potae, of Milton, both aiming to be the first South Island-based woolhandlers to compete at the World Championships since 2005.

Having won the Raglan final in 2009, Herbert goes into Saturday's event as reigning national champion, and also reigning national crossbred lambs champion after winning that title at Winton last January.

Napier shearer John Kirkpatrick will be the favourite to win the Open shearing title on Saturday as he prepares for the resumption of the shearing World Championships qualifying series in Southland later in the month.

Just back from a month's shearing in Australia, he won the title last year and won four competitions in the pre-Christmas stage of the Shearing Sports New Zealand season, in which he is well-placed to head the national rankings for a sixth year in a row.

It was today not clear if 2010 champion and 2011 runner-up and Taranaki farmer Paul Avery will compete. Almost retired from competition shearing, he won at his only attempt this season in his home Stratford show in November but is currently in training for the Coast to Coast Classic longest-day event in February. He was third overall and winning veteran in the two-day classification last year.

More than 1000 lambs are being prepared for Saturday's events, which starts off a busy post-Christmas competition season. Junior heats start at 8.30am, and the woolhandling heats start at 11am.

The first event of the New Year in the South Island will be the Peninsula Duvauchelle Shears at the Duvauchelle Show on January 14. Shearing, which starts at 10am, will be in four classes from Open to Junior, as well as Veterans, and there will also be a Speedshear.

The shearing focus now turns to Te Hape, near Bennydale, where Te Kuiti shearer Kerri-Jo Te Huia will tomorrow attempt the Women's record of 470, held by Ingrid Baynes, of Wairoa.

Ireland; Colm McLaughlin, of Claudy, Northern Ireland.