

Media Releases March 2017

National titles double for Gisborne woolhandler - March 30, 2017

Gisborne woolhandler Brittany Tibble returned to the scene of her first woolhandling final win to record her second a year later on the opening day of the 2017 New Zealand Shearing Championships in Te Kuiti today.

Tibble scored her first win in the New Zealand Championships Senior final a year ago and repeated the effort today. Although she started woolhandling about six years ago, the 25-year-old mum-of-two has had only three other appearances in finals, including third in the Golden Shears Senior woolhandling final last year.

To win today's five-handler final with the wool from five second-shear sheep each she had to beat two of the best performers of the 2016-2017 season.

Napier woolhandler Angela Stevens, of Napier, who won the Junior title last year and who last month won the Southland All Nations Senior woolhandling title during the World championship in Invercargill, was runner-up and 2017 Golden Shears Senior champion Jamie McLean, of Taihape, was fifth.

Napier shearer Ricci Stevens completed three unique doubles when he won the Junior woolhandling final - emulating the win by wife Angela last year, adding the title to the Junior shearing title he won in 2015 and a Golden Shears-New Zealand Championships double in the last month.

It was Ricci Stevens' seventh woolhandling win of the season, and fourth in a row, while he has also won two of his 16 Senior shearing finals leading into the championships, where the targets included the Senior shearing title in Te Kuiti where the Senior heats will be shorn tomorrow (Friday).

Results of finals on the opening day of the New Zealand Shearing Championships being held in Te Kuiti on March 30-April 1, 2017:

Woolhandling:

New Zealand Championships Senior final (5 second-shear sheep): Brittany Tibble (Gisborne) 69.87pts, 1; Angela Stevens (Napier) 73.56pts, 2; Ash Boyce (Dannevirke) 75.84pts, 3; Raniera Whare (Taumarunui) 84.72pts, 4; Jamie McLean (Taihape) 95.93pts, 5.

New Zealand Championships Junior final (5 sheep): Ricci Stevens (Napier) 54.84pts, 1; Darryl Harrison (Dannevirke) 72.97pts, 2; Summer Pritchard (Pongaroa) 73.462pts, 3; Bianca Hawea (Masterton) 81.53pts, 4; Jodie Hogg (Te Kuiti) 111.81pts, 5.



BRITTANY TIBBLE: Successfully defended New Zealand Championships Senior woolhandling title.



RICCI STEVENS: Won the Junior woolhandling final which was won last year by then-fiance Angela Kirkpatrick, now wife Angela Stevens.

Henare a hot favourite for national woolhandling title - March 30, 2017

World and Golden Shears champion Joel Henare confirmed his favouritism for a fourth national Open woolhandling title by heading the qualifiers on the opening day of the three-day New Zealand Shearing Championships in Te Kuiti today.

The TAB confirmed him as a hot-favourite at \$1.18, after his World and Golden Shears open triumphs in the last seven weeks, but it's shaping as possibly the Dunedin-based Gisborne champion's toughest final in a season in which he won his second World individual title in Invercargill in February and his fifth Golden Shears Open title earlier this month.

On Saturday night he will be up against six-times winner Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, who was second-to-top qualifier and is paying \$3.50 to win, and home-town hope and 2013 winner Hanatia Tipene, who was third to top qualifier and is paying \$11..

The other two finalists are Open finals rookie Eramiha, of Dannevirke, and Australia-based Jo Tarrant.

Among those eliminated in the semi-finals was Gisborne's Maryanne Baty, who won the World teams title with Henare last month.

The opening day was confined to woolhandling events, with the Junior and Senior winners being announced tonight, at a Spredshearer in the Waitomo Club, a short distance from the venue of the championships, the Les Munro Centre.

The Novice and Junior shearing titles will be among those decided tomorrow, along with the North Island Shearer of the Year title to be decided in the evening..

Result of the semi-final of the New Zealand Open Woolhandling Championships at Te Kuiti today (top 5 to final on Saturday night): Joel Henare (Gisborne) 70.22pts, 1; Sheree Alabaster (Taihape) 74.06pts, 2; Hanatia Tipene (Te Kuiti) 74.19pts, 3; Eramiha Noho (Dannevirke) 68.35pts, 4; Jo Tarrant (Mortlake, Australia) 82.09pts, 5; Ratapu Moore (Seddon) 85pts, 6; Monica Potae (Milton) 85.53pts, 7; Keryn Herbert (Te Kuiti) 87.532pts, 8; Angela Walker (Piopio) 91.62pts, 9; Maryanne Baty (Gisborne) 102.06pts, 10

Winning weekends on the road for shearer Rowland Smith - March 26, 2017

Champion shearer Rowland Smith is as busy as the Prime Minister - and that's just in his spare time.

In the six months of the Shearing Sports New Zealand season, which hits a peak with the national championships in Te Kuiti from Thursday to Saturday this week, he's shorn, and generally won, a schedule which looks almost like a backpacker's guide to the antipodes downunder.

In addition to running a small farm block near Hastings, the daily job of shearing his share of the nation's flock in the woolshed and being dad to two young ones, the 30-year-old two metres tall shearer has shorn competitions in Alexandra, Wairialda (NSW), Gisborne, Hastings, Carterton, Feilding, Christchurch, Waipukurau, Tauranga, Wairoa, Levin, Taihape, Rotorua, Dannevirke, Marton, Invercargill, Gore, Pukekohe, Taumarunui, Apiti, Pahiatua, Masterton, Palmerston North, Stratford, Raetihi, and at Waitomo.

Had it not been for rain, he would have flown to Auckland for the Kumeu sandwiched between winning the inaugural New Zealand Rural Sportsman of the Year Award and contesting the Rural Games Speedshear two days apart in Palmerston North earlier this month.

Along the way he's shorn in 25 finals, and won 21, and when he won at the Waitomo Caves Shears on Saturday - a four-hour drive each way from home - it was his 14th win in a row since he was last beaten, at the Rotorua A and P Show on January 29. It's a sequence that includes completing a career century of Open-class win (among them the 2014 World title), and on March 4 his fourth Golden Shears Open title.



Photo attached is Rowland Smith after winning a fourth Golden Shears Open shearing final on March 4.
PHOTO/PETE NIKOLAISON

This week, Smith is the favourite for a rare treble of the three Open titles at the national championships, including the New Zealand Shears Circuit, despite it's final being one of the few major events he has never contested.

He'll also be up against new World champions and former circuit winners John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, and Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill.

But he is the top qualifier for Saturday morning's 12-man semi-finals, and if he can win the final and a fifth New Zealand Open title on Saturday night, along with a fifth North Island Shearer of the Year title on Friday night, he will be the first to claim the treble in 13 years.

The last was legendary David Fagan who won all three in 2002, bouncing back a month after his first Golden Shears Open final defeat in 13 years.

There's more to go yet for Smith who is planning a July 24 World Record attempt in England on the solo eight-hours strongwool ewe mark of 605, travel possibly per victory in the Championship or Circuit finals, which each carry a place in a New Zealand team to the UK.

Life hasn't been all triumph, though, for in November a mere 0.032pts when third in a New Zealand team trial at the Canterbury Show cost him a place in the two-man machine shearing team at the World Championships in Invercargill in February.

The day after that demise in Christchurch he shored at the Central Hawke's Bay show in Waipukurau, one of only four times this season he has failed to make a final, but it was the start of a road back in

which it has been mainly the handpiece and his lengthy arms that have been doing the talking, with a possible long term goal of winning-back the World title in France in 2019.

On the chances of the rare treble in Te Kuiti this week, he simply said: "I'll just try to do the best I can."

The 12 for the circuit semi-finals, shearing for places in a six-man final of comprising five finrwool merinos, and a strongwool combination of five second-shear ewes and five lambs each, come from shearers' best five placings selected competitions throughout the country.

Smith's win in a 20-sheep final on Saturday - in which he shored the fastest time of 18min 9sec and had the best quality points - was by a wide margin of 6.2pts over runner-up Mark Grainger, of Te Kuiti.

The Waitomo Senior title was won by Golden Shears Senior winner Darren Alexander, of Whangamomona, the Intermediate title by Blake Hewes, of Tuakau, and the Junior title by South Island shearer Tyson Crown, of Maitua.

The qualifiers for the semi-final of the New Zealand Shears Circuit on the last day of the New Zealand Shearing Championships in Te Kuiti on March 30-April 1 are: Rowland Smith (Hastings), Nathan Stratford (Invercargill), John Kirkpatrick (Napier), David Buick (Pongaroa), Troy Pyper (Invercargill), Andy Mainland (Invercargill), Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti), Digger Balme (Te Kuiti), Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti), Murray Henderson (Halcomb), Sam Welch (Waikaretu), Floyd Neil (Taumarunui).

Results from the Waitomo Caves Shears on Saturday, March 25, 2017:

Open final (20 sheep): Rowland Smith (Hastings) 18min 9sec, 61.5pts, 1; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 19min 38sec, 67.7pts, 2; James Fagan (Raglan) 18min 51sec, 67.8pts, 3; James Ruki (Te Kuiti) 20min 15sec, 72pts, 4.

Senior final (10 sheep): Darren Alexander (Whangamomona) 12min 50sec, 46.9pts, 1; Tegwyn Bradley (Woodville) 13min 9sec, 48.35pts, 2; Ricci Stevens (Napier) 13min 54sec, 52.2pts, 3; Lionel Taumata (Taumarunui/Gore) 13min 6sec, 55.2pts, 4.

Intermediate final (5 Sheep): Blake Hewes (Tuakau) 9min 26sec, 38.1pts, 1; Laura Bradley (Woodville) 9min 47sec, 38.15pts, 2; Josef Winders (Tussock Creek) 9min 22sec, 42.7pts, 3; Liam Lowry (Glen Murray) 44.6pts, 4.

Junior final (4 Sheep): Tyson