

## The guns are firing for NZ Shears champs - March 26 2012

The guns are firing for NZ Shears champs this week

This week's New Zealand Shearing Championships in Te Kuitiseem set for a classic showdown after wins by World champion team members and Hawke's Bay guns Cam Ferguson and John Kirkpatrick during the weekend.

It was a particularly special moment for Ferguson when he won the Waitomo Caves Shears on Saturday, his first Open final win in the North Island since November 2010, the year he won the Golden Shears Open final in Masterton and the World individual title in Wales.

He then finished fourth to Kirkpatrick in the Taranaki Shears final in Stratford yesterday. Troubled by a back injury for half this season, the Waipawa shearer still managed to win the World teams title with Napier gun Kirkpatrick in Masterton three weeks ago, as well finish runner-up in both the Golden Shears Open and World Championships individual finals.

Afterwards he headed for the South Island to get back into winning form and reckoned after his weekend efforts: ♦ The back ♦s all good. Heaps of work. Back to normal. ♦

The 20-sheep Stratford final was a spectacular affair with just six seconds separating the first four, veteran David Fagan first to the button in 15min 37.02sec and showing he ♦s still capable of another big win for the hometown fans in Te Kuiti.

Dion King, of Hastings, was next in 15min 42.19sec, just beating Kirkpatrick defending Taranaki and New Zealand champion Rowland Smith, of Ruawai.

But Kirkpatrick, who in Masterton won the Golden Shears Open for a fourth time, got the nod with the better quality, denying Smith of a third win in a row after victories at Kumeu and Raetihi in the previous fortnight.

Hometown hero, 2008 World Champion and Coast-to-Coast racer Paul Avery was fifth, dedicating his emergence from (shearing) semi-retirement to wife Debra, who remains in hospital after being seriously injured in a road crash about a month ago.

A single cut proved a costly blemish for Fagan, relegating him to sixth place, but it was still better than new World champion Gavin Mutch, the Taranaki-based Scotsman whose day away from the Whangamomona farm ended with his elimination in the semi-final.

New Golden Shears champions won two of the other four finals, with Tysson Hema, of Waipukurau, claiming the senior title and Josh Balme, of Te Kuiti, the novice title. The intermediate final was won by Michael Rolston, of Levin, while Dannevirke ♦s Keanu Sutton had his maiden junior victory.

The Open woolhandling final was won by Keryn Herbert, of Te Awamutu, securing her Shearing Sports New Zealand ♦s No 1 open ranking for the season.

The New Zealand championships start on Thursday and end on Saturday.

[Click here for the Taranaki Shears results](#)

## GOLDEN SHEARS on TV - March 19 2012

The World Championships and the Golden Shears will feature on two one-hour programmes starting on Sky Tv Sport this week.

The World Championships will screen first on Sky Sport 3 on Tuesday (March 20) at 6.30pm, with replays on Wednesday (March 21) on Sky Sport 1 at 10pm, and on Thursday (March 22) at 11am on Sky Sport 3.

The Golden Shears feature will be first next Tuesday (March 27) on Sky Sport 3 at 6.30pm, and rescreened on the same channel the next day (March 28) at 1.30pm, and on Friday March 30 at 7.30pm on Sky Sport 2.

The 52nd Golden Shears, featuring the 15th World Championships, were held in Masterton on February 29-March 3. The individual machine title was won by Gavin Mutch (pictured), of Scotland, the New Zealand pair of Cam Ferguson and John Kirkpatrick won the teams title, Gisborne's Joel Henare won the individual woolhandling title and paired with Joanne Kumeroa, of Whanganui, to win the teams title, while South Africa dominated the blades shearing, Zweliwile Hans winning the singles title from teammate Mayenzeke Shweni, with whom he also won the teams title.

Kirkpatrick won the Golden Shears Open shearing title for a fourth time, and Kumeroa won the Open woolhandling title for a sixth time, and a third in a row.



Gavin Mutch of Scotland

## Stars at the Goldies: Mutch, Kirkpatrick, Henare, Kumeroa - March 05, 2012

The crowd may have been beying for another New Zealand win, but they were still pretty happy when the affable Taranaki-based Scots shearer Gavin Mutch finally got the big one after seven years of trying in the World machine shearing championship.

He'd surprised even himself when fifth at his championships debut on the merinos in Toowoomba in 2005, was the biggest threat to the Kiwis in Bjerkreim in 2008 but finished sixth, and in Wales in 2010 had to settle for fifth again, after flanking one sheep, and maximum penalty without which he probably would have won the title.

After the win on the fourth and final night of the 42nd Golden Shears in Masterton on Saturday night (March 3), he said there wasn't a day in the shed where he didn't relive that blow. "It's horrible," he said.

It was a triumph, however, which was Oh so close to not happening at all, for having competed in only a handful of competitions during the season, he spent the last fortnight or so with a right shoulder injury, which seems to move around the body - thigh, back, you name it.



Angus Moore, of Ward, after winning the country's top multi-breeds shearing event, the PGG Wrightson National Final, during the Golden Shears in Masterton on Saturday.

*Photo by Richard Sampey*

The big weekend of Taumarunui, Apiti and Pahiatua just before the Shears was to have been the blow-out, but it ended on Day 1, when he made his first 20-sheep final of the season.

"The first 15 were good," he said. "The last five weren't."

He was doubting whether he'd get to hear the bi "Judges ready, competitors ready call," in Masterton, and headed back to Whangamomona where he farms 1000ac with local girl and wife Pip, helps raise daughters Ashleigh, 4, Isla, and four-month-old James.

He shore 150 on the Sunday, and the rest is pretty much history, with Norway-based Scotland teammate a close second to Kiwis John Kirkpatrick and defending individual champion Cam Ferguson in the teams event on the Friday, then first off the board in the individual final and the big win, albeit by just 0.068pts from Ferguson, himself battling a back injury.

It may have been a big one for Scotland, but it was possibly a bigger one for Whangamomona, the 32-year-old on one hand proudly wearing the Pride of Scotland, on the other talking of the his adopted "home," it's community spirit, and that this was finally night to give them something back for their support in his failed 2009 and 2010 lambshearing record attempts.

In front of 1500 frenzied spectators, including Prime Minister John Key and Governor-General Sir Jerry Mateparae, Mutch and Waipawa shearer Ferguson were at opposite ends of the board.

The attention was supposed to focus on the hot favourite on stand No 3, Napier man Kirkpatrick, desperate to go one better than his second-placing in Norway three-and-a-half years earlier to teammate Paul Avery, another Taranaki farmer.

Mutch got a flyer at the start of the glamour event of the six for individual and teams World Championships run in conjunction with the 52nd Golden Shears.

It was significant, for the first four were the least familiar coarse-wooled corriedales, of which he'd shorn barely a pen-or-two full in his life - once at Christchurch and a couple times in the PGG National finals.

"But I do know that a good corrie is the best sheep of all," he said.

As he changed handpieces into the six-sheep long strongwool leg he was well in charge, already a sheep ahead of Welshman Gareth Daniel who tailed the field, and at least half a sheep clear of anyone else.

The New Zealanders struck back on their favourites, the 10 second-shear crossbreds, and as they finished there were just 11 seconds in it - Mutch finishing in 19min 12.17sec, Ferguson next in 19:16.546 and Kirkpatrick third off in 19:22.963.

The crowd waited anxiously through other events for the result after judging of the quality but Mutch, with parents Neil and Moira both over from Huntly in Aberdeenshire and among the crowd, knew he'd done his best to make up for the past, and he knew Kirkpatrick wasn't particularly confident.

Ultimately, all placings were as they came off the board - 2000 and 2005 champion, 2011 NZ Corriedales champion and Australian representative Shannon Warnest fourth, followed by Gareth Daniel, of Wales, and Adam Berry, of England.

The 32-year-old winner, whose only previous win this season was at tiny Ohura, indicated he might not be seen a lot on the competition scene over the next two years, saying he wanted more time with the family, but he planned to be at Kumeu a week after the big win, along with a 21st birthday in the area.

New Zealanders woolhandlers Joanne Kumeroa, with two individual titles behind her along with five Golden Shears Open victories on the Masterton board, and Joel Henare, the 20-year-old at his first World championships and yet to win a Golden Shears title, were, in that order, warm favourites for the woolhandling honours.

But it was Henare who became the star of the show, in front through the early rounds, and ultimately in the final, a triumph popularly received in hometown Gisborne and also around Cromwell where he also went to school, while mum Greta was in the shed.

The winning speech over, there were therefore no surprises with Kumeroa named runner-up and third place going to Australia-based New Zealander and former Golden Shears Open winner Aroha Garvin, who lives in York, West Australia. Fourth was Norway's Jonathan Haakull, a regular in New Zealand competitions but having only recently started to make some mark at Open competition level.

The blades shearing championship was robbed of some of its sparkle when four-times winner Elliot Ntsombo, from Lesotho, was unable to travel because of a visa issue.

Three-times winner Zweliwile Hans, of South Africa, became the hot favourite and obliged in the final in which he shored the seven sheep in 21min 7.66sec, about 22 seconds quicker than teammate Mayenzeke Shweni, who had dominated the preliminary rounds.

Hans was more than two minutes quicker than first New Zealander Brian Thomson, who beat teammate Mike McConnell by five seconds, but it was McConnell, the New Zealand selection series winner, who ultimately claimed third place.

## **GOLDEN SHEARS**

If everything was OK in the World events, it was JK in the big Golden Shears events, where John Kirkpatrick and Joanne Kumeroa successfully defended the titles they had won in 2011 - with another JK, the Prime Minister watching from the front row.

For Kirkpatrick it was a fourth Open title, on the 10th anniversary of the first in which he broke the stranglehold King Country icon David Fagan had held by winning 12 times in a row.

It moved him one ahead of other three-times winners Roger Cox and Colin King, next target the six of the great Snow Quinn from 1965-72, but still well short of the 16 won from 1986-2009 by Fagan, who

at the age of 50 was there again, finishing fourth shearing Open Final No 26 out of the last 29 which he started when runner-up to brother John in 1984.

Knowing from the quality of the job that it was not to be his night in the World final, he then put on a display of shearing perfection, through the Open's 20 crossbred second shear sheep in 16min 8.967sec, and also posting the best quality points to win by more than three-and-a-half points from Ferguson, another remarkable second considering the recent injury problems.

It was among the faster finals, but still 18 seconds slower than last years 15min 50.823sec, and a way-off Fagan's record of 15min 27.4sec, posted when he bounced-back from his 2002 demise to win again in 2003.

Ruawai kid and 2011 runner-up Rowland Smith had in the days preceding the event headed Kirkpatrick off in the TAB favouritism, after seven wins in Open finals in four weeks, but had to settle for third place.

With Fagan next, fifth place went to lone South Island hope Darin Forde, returning to the Open final after an absence of eight years - he was third in 1999, fourth in 2000 and 2001, and third in 2004. Mutch was in his fourth final - "buggered," as he put it -and finished sixth.

There was not the slightest hint of a retirement or event cut-back in appearances for Kirkpatrick who had had a personal trainer as he strove to win the World title. He barely displayed any disappointment, saying he'd be doing it all again in a bid to win at the next World Championships in Gorey, County Wexford, Ireland, in 2014.

Kumeroa's win was her third in a row, and came 17 years after her first, in 1995, while Henare's second placing came after also being runner-up last year. Keryn Herbert, of Te Awamutu was third, also left waiting for another year, and Huia Whyte-Puna, of Christchurch, was fourth in her bid to regain the title she won in 2007.

The senior title went to 20-year-old father-of-three and Waipukurau shearer Tysson Hema, his first Golden Shears win after being intermediate runner-up in 2010 and sixth in the Senior last year.

He appreciated afterwards it won't be easy in the Open grade next season, and said his goal would be to make the Golden Shears Top 30.

The Intermediate shearing title went to Bryce Guy, of Kaeo, in what is thought to have been the fastest time apart from a sub-nine time recorded for Kirkpatrick when he won his first Golden Shears title in 1993.

The Junior title went to Andrew Leith, a farmer's son from Dipton in Central Southland, and the novice title to Josh Balme, son of King Country shearing showman and nine-times Open finalist Digger Balme.

The senior woolhandling title went to Fiona Christensen, of Masterton. It was her first win of the season, and she became the first person to win any Golden Shears shearing or woolhandling lower grade twice.

The junior title was won by Ann-Marie Kahukura, from Omakau in Central Otago, another win in a successful first season of competition, encouraged by employer Dion Morrell.

Morrell was also influential in the triumph of Marlborough shearer Angus Moore in the PGG Wrightson National series final, the 40th since the event was founded as the McSkimming Memorial Triple Crown and won by Joe Ferguson in 1973.

It was a popular win, especially at the TAB which had been facing big payouts on Darin Forde (second), Nathan Stratford (third) and James Fagan (fourth) had any of them won.

The accolade of top multi-breeds shearer was deserved by Moore who had been runner-up in Rakaia shearer Tony Coster's third consecutive win the previous year, and he praised the input of Morrell, who he rated the best of all-time.

On stage he forgot it at the time, but moments later, with a warm clasp of the hand, Morrell said that was fine. The win was enough.

### Main Golden Shears story of the day, World Championships first round to follow.

The determination of a Northland teenager to make up for finishing second in last year's Golden Shears Junior final was obvious he won the Intermediate title on the second day of this year's championships in Masterton.

Highlighting a modern trend for shearing becoming a sport of choice for some teenagers, 18-year-old Bryce Guy, of Kaeo, shore a possible record Intermediate final time of 9min 24.043sec for its eight sheep.

If such a pace was kept-up for throughout a nine-hour day in the woolshed, Guy would be producing tallies of over 470, making him an Open-class shearer and ruling himself out of any of the lower classes.

But he said after his victory, turning the tables on 2011 Junior victory Michael Rolston, of Levin, he decided early in the season to prepare especially for the Intermediate final.

"I knew it would take about 10 minutes," he said, "so I started going for a 10-minute run every day, a hard run, up the hills."

When he was in the woolshed, he'd pick out 10 competition quality sheep a run and have them held back until the last 10 minutes, to give himself a better guide on how he was doing.



Bryce Guy, after presentation  
Story and pic Doug Laing

While he had won the New Zealand Junior title last season, a few weeks after the Masterton final, it was the Golden Shears he wanted to win, emulating the feats of older brother Bevan, who won the title in 2009, and younger brother Charlie who won the Novice final last year.

Shearing on stand one today, his only challenger for the lead was Napier-based English shearer Dean Nelmes at the other end of the board, but there was still almost 20 seconds between them Kimbolton shearer and nationally-rated Sevens player Sarah Goss produced the only better board judging points and the question was whether the penalties Guy would also shed in the pen judging would cost him his dream.

Ultimately it was a close call with Guy beating Rolston by 0.753pts.

It was the fifth title decided at the championships, which stepped up later in the day with the first rounds of the World Championship events being run in conjunction with the Golden Shears.,

On Wednesday night, 13-year-old Josh Balme, from Te Kuiti and now a first-year boarder at St Paul's Colegiate in Hamilton, won the novice final, showing a bit of one-upmanship to father Digger Balme, a nine-times Open finalist who's shorn at Golden Shears for 30 years without getting his name on winners' board.

Two years ago Masterton's David Gordon won the Noovice title, also at the age of 13 and becoming the youngest person to win the grade since it was first included in the programme in 1998.

Josh Balme only scraped into the final replacing a qualifier who was ruled ineligible for the class, relied on quality to take the title, after being second-to-last to finish the two-sheep showdown.

Southland shearer Andrew Leith, 22, of Dipton, capped a big first season shearing fulltime by winning the Junior final, the sixth title he was won since October. He was a comfortable winner over runner-up Stuart Davidson, from Lanarkshire , Scotland .

The south claimed a second title on the night when 20-year-old Ann-Marie Kahukura won the Junior woolhandling final, and Masterton's Fiona Christensen became the first person to win two titles in any Golden Shears grade other than Open when she retained the woolhandling title she won last year. With a string of successes also in woolpressing, it's the 9th year that she's stood on the victor's stand at the Shears.

### Who's running this parade? - March 01, 2012

When Australian Golden Shears World Council member Peter Bjorksten heard the line he was treading during the parade opening the 15h World Championships parade at Masterton's Queen Elizabeth Park Oval was once run by Aussie running great Ron Clarke he was just the man to fill the shoe's almost half-a-century later.

"I used to be a runner," he said, breaking into a jog. "Almost ran a four-minute mile."

From Euroa, Vic, where the Australian Golden Shears were held, he then related how at the peak of his athletic prowess in 1956-58 he ran a mile in 4min 5sec, just two seconds outside the Australian record at the time, and the also did a 1min 56sec Hlf-mile.

It was in 1963 that Clarke ran on the oval, during an ambitious new sports carnival known as the Golden Games, capitalising on the branding already well established by the Golden Shears in just three years since they were first held in 1961.

But the Games were held just once more, in 1965.

The parade featured not just the 24 teams, but also a surprising number of family members who had made the trip to New Zealand.

After the official welcome delivered by Mayor Gary Daniell and Golden Shears president Mavis Mullins, the teams, and their families, travelled by bus for a powhiri in which the local Maori community, or tangata whenua, welcomed the competitors at Te Ore Ore Marae.



Australian Golden Shears World Council delegate Peter Bjorksten and blades shearer Peter Artridge break into jog, following in the footsteps of running great Ron Clarke.



The New Zealand team line up for a team photo, waiting for an extra bus to arrive after those available were filled by visiting teams and family members

### Balmy night for Golden Shears opening final - March 01, 2012

The shout was on 13-year-old King Country schoolboy Josh Balme who in Masterton achieved something dad Digger Balme was unable to do in 30 years of trying, by getting his name onto the Honours Board at the Golden Shears.

It immediately provoked memories of the boy's next most famous moment, when interviewed by ring-in commentator and Prime Minister after a father-and-son event at last year's New Zealand Championships in Te Kuiti.

Then just 12, he confessed that at the end of a day in the shed, and if he'd been a good boy, then Dad might let him have a wee beer.

The retelling of such a yarn may be slightly on the blush side for a young chap just starting-out boarding at St Paul's Collegiate in Hamilton, but who's going to worry when there's a Golden Shears champion in the House - Sargood House, actually.



WHO'S PROUDEST: The father, Digger Balme, or the winner, Josh Balme, or the mother Cheryl. Note the tape strapping a hand injury received just two weeks earlier

It was possibly the school's first-ever Golden Shears champion, with apparently not many more to come, at least not in the near future.

In four weeks at high school, the silky Balme kid had located only one other student who had done any shearing, but he reckoned more than a few were aware of why he had taken a few days off so early in the piece.

It was a win that so nearly wasn't, at the end of the semi-finals Balme had placed seven, and missed out by one. He got back in when the initial sixth qualifier was shearing out of class.

Out to emulate Masterton's David Gordon, who also at the age of 13 won the Novice final two years ago, and with it acclaim as the youngest person to win a Golden Shears final, Balme relied on quality rather than speed and in the first final of the championships was the second-to-last to finish his two sheep.

Levin youngster Neil Bryant made the pace and beat him by a minute, but the proof was in the winning margin separating them in first and second, 2.52pts.

Digger Balme is also competing at the championships, trying to reach a 10th Golden Shears Open final, the best result a second placing in 1998 - albeit 3.3pts down the then unbeatable David Fagan.

Central Otago farmer's son Andrew Leith scored his sixth win of the summer when he won the Junior final. The 22-year-old from Dipton was first off the board in the 5-sheep final and scored by more than three points from runner-up Stuart Davidson, from Lanarkshire, in Scotland.

He first competed at Lumsden in January last year, and having abandoned studies at Lincoln, he set-about a fulltime shearing career with Linton and Corey Palmer and scored his first win in the New Zealand Corriedale Championships in Christchurch in November.

He'd only taken to the handpiece aged 17 or 18, crutching to earn a few dollars after leaving Central Southland High School where he played rugby as a prop - not that anyone would have guessed, with the traditional prop's beef worn away by the toil of the woolshed (ie, he's lost a bit of weight).

Young Omakau woolhandler Anne-Marie Kahukura had a short while earlier in the night claimed the South Island's first title of this year's Shears with victory in the junior woolhandling final.

The 20-year-old Kahukura works for Alexandra contractor and former top shearer Dion Morrell, but her family has been involved in shearing for years, with a contract run operated by her grandfather now run by an uncle.

A former Dunstan High School pupil, her win was the fourth of her first season in competition, in a final dominated by Otago and Southland-based woolhandlers.

Foonie Waihape, from Gisborne, was second, while Sheree Peterson, of Milton, was third.

Fiona Christison, of Masterton, became the first person to win two finals in the same grade other than Open, when she retained the Senior woolhandling title. With woolpressing her forte she has won at least one title at each Golden Shears for nine years in a row.