

## First win in eight years for the big man - November 30, 2009

Shearing has seen one of its more popular wins with Wanganui gun Jerome McCrea beating World champion Paul Avery on the champion's home stage in Stratford.

A serious knee injury once had 35-year-old McCrea thinking his shearing was over for good, and he hadn't won a title in eight years until his triumph in an 18-sheep final at the Stratford A and P Show on Saturday, but now he's after the big one - the next World championships in Wales next July.

"That's the lure," he said. "Everyone's going for it."

Re-entering the competition scene only last January, the journey really started when after less than two months he qualified for the six-man Golden Shears open final in Masterton, sharing the drama of the comeback 16th win by King Country icon David Fagan, at the age of 47.

McCrea had reached the final in his last season of shearing in 2002, when his abilities as a shearer were almost concealed by his image as a monster biker, on his beloved Harley Davidson.

But he said after his win at the weekend the bike had been gone at least three years, replaced by a boat, and he's working on shedding the extra kilos which once propped-up the profile.

Once over 100kg, but having been fit enough to become one of Wanganui's top rugby referees, he's been in the gym and is down to 91kg, but reckons there's more to come-off yet.

"After the Golden Shears I decided to get into-it, and lose a bit of weight," he said. "Life's not much fun if you're overweight."

His two Golden Shears finals are the highlights of his career, especially the big night 10 months ago.

"I did give myself a chance of making it," he said. "Everyone else was saying I couldn't."

He followed-up the fifth placing in Masterton by reaching the North Island Shearer of the Year final and the New Zealand open semi-final in Te Kuiti, and this season, chasing the competitions around the country and including three trips to the South Island, he had been sixth in the New Zealand Corriedale final won by Fagan in Christchurch, and third to Avery in Nelson a week before Saturday's win, which he secured with the better qualifying points after Avery won the race by six seconds.

Avery, who had won his home event more times than he could remember, incurred significant penalties for a cut about two-thirds of the way through the contest, watched by a crowd tightly packed under cover as rain disrupted much of the rest of the show, but in the end-result it didn't matter.

"Jerome had a blitzer," said the 42-year-old Avery after what was the last event on the Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar before Christmas.

It leaves a six-week break until his defence of the national lambshearing title at Raglan when the competition season resumes on January 9, but Avery will be looking for as much shearing as possible to get ready for his own bid for a chance to defend his World title, with the race for New Zealand's two positions now shaping as the keenest since the first world shearing championships were held 32 years ago.

Although runner-up on Saturday, it was still a proud day for Avery, who watched 15-year-old son David compete for the first time. Having shorn less than a hundred sheep in his life, the teenager was third in the novice event.

Having spent two years building, and running a stock pregnancy testing business in the winter, and done some contracting, McCrea is also turning his shearing journey back into a family thing with sons Jack, 11, and Brad, 9, and wife Tanya regular travelling companions on the journeys which in the North Island have seen him also competing in Gisborne and Hawke's Bay.

"They are loving it," he said.

[For results from the Stratford A & P Show at Stratford click here](#)

### **Avery completes Tasman double - November 23, 2009**

World champion shearer Paul Avery completed a Tasman double when he won the Nelson A and P open shearing title on Saturday.

But, venturing on a second trip south from his farm near Stratford, Avery didn't have it as easy as when he won the Marlborough Show title a fortnight earlier.

Wanganui shearer Jerome McCrea set the pace in the 20 sheep final, which he finished in 18min 5sec, beating Avery off the board by 38 seconds. With McCrea losing valuable quality points outside and having to settle for third, well-travelled Jason Win, of Ikamatua, was runner-up almost two points behind Avery.

On Sunday Renwick shearer Chris Jones won the Top of the South open final, while Brenda Kinzett, of Wakefield, completed a rare double by adding the junior woolhandling title to the intermediate shearing title she won on Saturday.

For results from the Nelson Show and Top of the South Shears in Nelson at the weekend [click here](#)

### **Top guns go south to bolster Nelson show - November 20, 2009**

At least two of the finalists from this year's Golden Shears open championship are expected to compete in the Nelson A and P Show Shears tomorrow [Saturday], giving a much welcome boost to the event.

World champion and two-times Golden Shears champion Paul Avery, the Taranaki farmer who was second to King Country icon David Fagan in Masterton's big event last March, will compete, while Wanganui gun Jerome McCrea, who was fifth at the Golden Shears, is also scheduled to make the trip, in search of points in the South Island Shearer of the year series.

But New Zealand open winner and Napier shearer John Kirkpatrick, who won a World teams title with Kirkpatrick 13 months ago, has decided against the trip because of the pressure of work in Hawke's Bay.

Avery has had one win this season, in Blenheim, while McCrea, was sixth to Fagan in the final of last Friday's New Zealand corriedale championship in Christchurch.

The star appearances have been welcomed by Nelson Shears shears organiser Roger Simpson, who expects to also be among the competitors, hoping Avery's presence at the Richmond Showgrounds will draw-out not only the open class shearers, but also shearers in the junior, intermediate and senior classes which have struggled for numbers in the region.

Among the open shearers will be local-area competitor Nick Nalder, arriving back today from a stint in Norway and ready to tackle not only the Nelson Open, but also the Top of the South finals at the Show on Sunday, which will also feature what some people believe is the Tasman region's first woolhandling

competition. An added attraction for shearers will be a Speedshear at the Nelson north Country Club on Saturday night.

The Top of the South will be decided in the intermediate, senior and open classes, with competitors qualifying for the finals with their best four sets of points from the eight shows in the region dating back to last year's Nelson Shears. Also in the circuit were the Golden Bay, Tapawera, Reefton, Murchison, Kaikoura, Flaxbourne and Marlborough shows.

The woolhandling on Sunday will include several competing for the first time, and industry trainers Tectra were running a course preparing woolhandlers for the event, under the guidance of 2007 Golden Shears open woolhandling champion Huia Whyte-Puna.

The only other competition remaining on the Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar before Christmas will be Avery's home show at Stratford next week, and the competition season will resume with the national lambshearing championships at Raglan's Western Shears on January and the Peninsula Duvauchelle Shears in the South Island on January 9.

### A big gap, but still close - November 15, 2009

A New Zealand team has scored a second big win over Australia in blade-shearing, but the result barely matters as the transtasman rivals prepare to tackle the sport's African might at next year's World Championships in Wales.

After the Kiwis' win in Christchurch on Friday, team member and Noel Handley said blade shearers are hopeful the match will lead to blade shearing being included in the annual home-and-away shearing sports transtasman series, despite the gap between the two countries in Christchurch and in another contest in Warialda, NSW, last month.

Handley and fellow Kiwi veteran John Kennedy won the first contest during the Australian shearing and woolhandling championships by 42.89pts, and Kennedy also won the championship final.

On Friday, Handley paired with fellow Rangiora shearer Allan Gemmell beat Australia's World championships team of 21-year-old South Australian blades and machine shearer John Dalla and Omarama-based John Nicholls by 37.459pts.

One stage of the New Zealand World championships blades team selection will be held at the 50th Golden Shears in Masterton in March, the first blade-shearing contest in the North Island for many years, and Handley said it is hoped that blade shearers will then be included in the next transasman series in the 2010-2011 season.

While New Zealander Tony Dobbs won the first World blade-shearing championship in 1992, the event has since been dominated by South Africa and Lesotho, with six wins between them.

Handley said the transtasman competition is important for the sake of keeping New Zealand and Australia competitive but also for the heritage of blade-shearing.

"I guess it keeps the competitive side going for us here, so hopefully this will be an annual event," he said. "It's been pretty well received, and we're keen to continue."

Results from Friday's match were:  
NZ Corriedale Shears Team 130.129pts (Noel Handley 12min 30.05sec, 60.503pts; Allan Gemmell 13min 7.52sec, 69.626pts) beat Australia 167.588pts (John Dalla 14min 5.5sec, 70.275pts; John Nicholls 13min 21.25sec, 97.313pts) by 37.459pts.

## Cam shafts top guns again - November 15, 2009

Emerging young Waipawa shearing hope Cam Ferguson scored possibly his most satisfying open win by beating World champions Paul Avery and John Kirkpatrick in a 15-sheep final at his home Central Hawke's Bay Shears in Waipukurau on Saturday.

Making it two-in-a-row on the North Island circuit after winning the Manawatu title a week earlier, the 26-year-old became the first CHB shearer to win the title since it was revived in 1994. Kirkpatrick, 39, of Napier, had won the last four and was second on Saturday, beaten by 0.79pts, while Avery, 42, from Taranaki, had also previously won the title and finished third.

When it came to the pace, all three had to follow Masterton-based Dannevirke shearer Adam Brausch, who at 23 also held the candle for the younger brigade to cut-out his pen in 14min 7sec, but just 25 seconds covered the field.

World champion woolhandler Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, also made it two-in-a-week by winning the open woolhandling final against New Zealand transtasman team members Keryn Herbert, of Te Awamutu, and Joel Henare, of Gisborne, who were second and third respectively, reversing their placings behind Alabaster's World champion teammate Joanne Kumeroa in the new Zealand Corriedale Championships in Christchurch on Thursday.

Both Kirkpatrick and Avery confirmed they will each be surprise competitors next Saturday at the Nelson Show, Kirkpatrick's fourth trip to the South Island and 9th competition in eight weeks.

## Fagan's latest triumph - November 13, 2009

Shearing icon David Fagan packed another major title on to his already chock-full CV when he won the New Zealand Corriedale title at the Canterbury show today.

It was the 48-year-old's 594th open-class victory, dating back to his first in Balclutha in early 1983. First off-the board in the six-man final over 10 sheep, it was his 13th win in the Christchurch event, which he last won in 2003. It was also his first win in the South Island in more than four years.

Runner-up today was Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill, while 2008 winner John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, was third.

The championships, in their 51st year, were a triumph for the veterans of the Shearing Sports New Zealand circuit, with the open woolhandling title going to three-times World champion Joanne Kumeroa, of Wanganui, and the open blade shearing final won by Billy Michelle, of Timaru.

## Avery bravery secures Marlborough win - November 8, 2009

World champion shearer and Taranaki farmer Paul Avery put aside worries about a lack of fitness on Saturday to win his first competition of the season in keeping a long-time promise to one day compete at the Marlborough Show in Blenheim.

But the 42-year-old revealed later it might have been his last chance, saying he doesn't know if he'll continue competing after this season in which his goal will be to win selection in the New Zealand team and defend his World title in Wales next July...

Having been well beaten the previous weekend in his first competition of the season in Warrnambool, Australia, which he said was "a bit embarrassing", Avery still struggled to find any shearing at home

during the week to prepare him for the trip south, which he plans to repeat for the Nelson show in two weeks' time. Ultimately he had to shear the small number of sheep off his own farm.

He made the trip to keep a promise to friend and Blenheim competition organiser Chris Jones, and among those he beat in the four-man final over 10 sheep was Kaikoura MP and three-times Golden shears open champion Colin King, who was third.

World woolhandling champion Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, also had a victory during the weekend, winning the open woolhandling final at the Manawatu A and P Show at Manfeild. It was her second title of the season, following a victory at the Poverty Bay Show last month.

Waipawa shearer Cam Ferguson won the Manawatu open shearing final, in which Avery's World Champion pairs teammate, John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, was third. But Kirkpatrick was more than compensated for his demise when he was named Ngati Kahungunu Sportsperson of the year at an awards dinner in Waipukurau a few hours later.

Meanwhile, veteran five-times World champion David Fagan, of te Kuiti, made his first competition visit to Pleasant Point in 28 years of open-class shearing but had to settle for second in the Mid Canterbury competition's final, won by Southland gun Nathan Stratford. Fagan was first off the board in a 20-sheep final he shored in 17min 24sec, but Stratford secured the win with superior quality points.

Fagan also had compensation at night, when he won a speedshear held as a fundraiser for local teenager Adam Grant, who recently lost an arm in a work accident.

## **Masterton teen wins Australian shearing title - November 2, 2009**

Masterton teenager Matene Mason has returned home triumphant after scoring a major and surprise victory in Australia at the weekend.

The No 2 ranked intermediate shearer in New Zealand last season, and winner of the New Zealand intermediate title in Te Kuiti in April, 17-year-old Mason won the Australian Romney Championships senior title on Saturday in Warrnambool, making him a national champion on both sides of the Tasman.

The winner of the intermediate title at the New Zealand Championships in Te Kuit last April, the weekend's triumph came just eight days after his breakthrough senior win in the Great Raihania Shears at the Hawke's Bay Show, and it was his first competition in Australia.

Mason qualified 10th of 12 for the semi-finals and then third of six for the final, in which was third off the board after shearing his six sheep in 8min 36sec. He made up for the time-points-deficit with better quality to score victory by a comfortable margin of 2.42pts over runner-up and first-placed Australian Correy Scott after judging was completed in the pens.

Son of Masterton shearing contractor Patty Mason, he learnt to shear as a young boy and had to miss his home Wairarapa Spring Shears on Saturday, an event in which he would otherwise have hoped to go one better than he did at the event when second in his first intermediate final last year.

He made the trip to Australia as one of a team of six shearers and woolhandlers sent to Warrnambool from the New Zealand Shearing Championships, and the class of his win was noted by teammate and shearing icon David Fagan, who guided him through his only woolshed preparation in Australia on Friday.

"The star of the trip was Matene Mason," Fagan said. "He was absolutely brilliant. He's got one hell-of-a future, that boy."

It was part of an all-round successful trip, with Tuatapere shearer Darrin Forde winning the 14-sheep open final, in which Fagan had to settle for fourth after being first-off in 13min 17sec. Fellow Te Kuiti shearer Dean Ball was runner-up, just 0.17pts behind the Southlander who Fagan said was shearing in some of his best form, after two months' shearing in Norway. World champion and Taranaki farmer Paul Avery, Australia-based 2006 Golden Shears champion Dion King, from Hawke's Bay, and New Zealand senior champion and first-year open competitor Ian Kirkpatrick all failed to reach the final.

New Zealand claimed two other victories, with Joanne Kumeroa, the mainly Australia-based former World woolhandling champion from Wanganui, winning the open woolhandling final, for which current World champion Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, failed to qualify, while the New Zealand Shears team of Fagan, Ball and Avery beat the Warrnambool Shears team of James Dolphin, Jason Wingfield and John Hand by just over 7pts in a teams shearing match over four merino wethers and four romney ewes, which Fagan completed first in 12min 28sec.