

November 26

## Shearing sports in line for Maori awards

Shearing Sports will be well represented at the Aotearoa Maori Sports Awards next Saturday with finalists in four categories, mainly recognising achievements at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary World championships in Invercargill last February.

They are headed by Sportsman of the Year candidate and World champion shearer John Kirkpatrick and Team of the Year hopefuls and World teams woolhandling champions Joel Henare and Maryanne Baty.

The others are shearing judge Ronnie King, in the running for Umpire/Referee of the Year, and Mavis Mullins, a finalist in the Administrator of the Year category.

Also of interest to the shearing fraternity is the appearance of former lower grades shearing champion and now rugby player Sarah Goss in the Sportswoman of the Year finalists, for her performances with the World Champion New Zealand women's rugby team and her captaincy of the New Zealand Women's Sevens team.

Kirkpatrick (Ngati Porou) faces particularly tough competition with new All Blacks rugby star Reiko Ioane (Te Whanau a Apanui/Ngapuhi) and World title winning softball player Nathan Nukunuku (Ngati Porou) among the finalists.

But Henare and Baty are the only World title combination in the teams' section, and will be hoping to go one better than when they were finalists in the teams' category at Gisborne Tairāwhiti's Logan Awards earlier this month, but missed the major prize.

It's been a big year for shearing sports at awards ceremonies throughout the country, starting with Kirkpatrick's winning of the top honour and the Sportsman of the Year title at the Hawke's Bay Sports Awards in May.

There were two successes at the Southland Sports Awards in June, when Kirkpatrick's World teams title teammate and individual final third placegetter Nathan Stratford won the People's Choice Award, and was also a finalist in the Sportsman of the Year category, and when Shearing Sports NZ South Island committee chairman and championships local organising committee head Mike Hogan was named Administrator of the Year.

Last month in Auckland, World championships organisers claimed two honours at the New Zealand Events Association awards in Auckland, the championships being rated Best International Event of the Year, while Invercargill's ILT Stadium was rated Best Industry Supplier for an Event, recognising the venue's transformation into a shearing shed for four days of competition and the efforts of staff in helping make the championships a success.

Shearing Sports New Zealand is also making several nominations for the premier national sports awards, the Halbergs, to be presented in February.

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