

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, Golden Shears Media Group, media officer Shearing Sports New Zealand
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Top lineups in tonight's Golden Shears finals

Gun Hawke's Bay shearer Rowland Smith has hit the mildest of speed bumps but still qualified to defend the Golden Shears Open title in Masterton.

The winner of every final he has contested in New Zealand in the last 13 months, Smith was just pipped for top qualifying spot from this afternoon's semi-finals.

Heading the six finalists, all of whom have been there before, was Pongaroa farmer David Buick, by just 0.063 points.

The margin means little going into the 20-sheep showdown starting just before 9 o'clock, apart from being a confidence booster for Buick and red-rag-to-a-bull for Smith.

The six finalists in order of qualifying are David Buick, of Pongaroa, Rowland Smith, of Hastings, Gavin Mutch, of Whangamomona, Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill, John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, and Murray Henderson, of Halcombe.

Joel Henare, from Gisborne, is on target for a sixth consecutive Golden Shears Open woolhandling title, with about as tough a lineup ever seen in the final. The four qualifiers are Joel Henare, South Island hopeful Pagan Karauria, of Alexandra, Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, and Maryanne Baty, of Gisborne.

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