

## MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand  
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Caption: World champion woolhandler Joel Henare when he regained the New Zealand Woolhandler of the Year Open title in 2015. He'd won it five times previously, and this weekend goes for four in a row.

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### Woolhandler Henare zeroes-in on a century of wins

World, Golden Shears and New Zealand woolhandling champion Joel Henare has the chance to go to the brink of becoming only the second person to win a hundred Open woolhandling titles, at the Otago championships which start in Balclutha today.

Henare enters the two-day championships with 97 wins since his first in the top grade at Waipukurau in November 2006, when he'd just turned 15.

From Gisborne, having grown up around the woolsheds of Central Otago, and now out of fulltime working in the wool industry and living and working in Motueka, he has an opportunity of two more wins over the two days with the championships' New Zealand Woolhandler of the Year and South Island Woolhandling Circuit finals being decided tomorrow.

He's going for four in a row in the Woolhandler of the Year event, to go with the five he won in succession between the ages of 16 and 20.

Only late mentor Joanne Kumeroa, from Whanganui, is thought to have won more Open woolhandling titles, with at least 128 wins in an Open-class career of just over 25 years from 1989 to when she passed-away in 2015.

The championships opened today with Open, Senior and woolhandling heats, with titles to be decided later in the day in Junior woolhandling, the Junior and Senior woolhandling circuits, and Junior and Intermediate shearing.

The Senior and Open woolhandling titles will be decided, along with the

Senior and Open shearing titles, a shearing teams event, and the second CP Wool Shearing Series test match in which the New Zealand team of Hawke's Bay shearers Rowland Smith and John Kirkpatrick will aim to go 2-0 up over Wales visitors Matthew Evans and Alun Lloyd Jones, after winning the first test at Marton last Saturday.

The championships are among 60 shows on the Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar this season and launch a hectic three weeks in which top shearers and woolhandlers will be chasing as many as seven titles from Gore in the south to Pukekohe in the north, before glamour show the Golden Shears in Masterton on March 1-3.

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